



Turkish army slams Yilmaz in Islamism row

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish army on Friday rejected criticism from Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, and reiterated its determination to fight Islamists. "No one can make statements aiming at weakening the determination of the armed forces to fight separatism and fundamentalism, which constitute a danger for the security of the country," the chief of staff said in a statement. Mr. Yilmaz called Tuesday on the powerful pro-secular army to stick to its own affairs and let his government deal with the battle against Islamism. The army response came after a meeting of the country's five top generals.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الوابي

Three Israeli soldiers wounded in south Lebanon

TYRE (AFP) — Three Israeli soldiers were slightly wounded in a guerrilla attack in the Israeli-occupied border zone in southern Lebanon, security sources said. The troops were injured when mortar shells fell on a radar station near the village of Bayyada in the western sector of Israel's self-declared "security zone," the sources said. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed so far this year in violence in southern Lebanon.

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King, Clinton discuss bilateral ties, Iraq and stalled Middle East peace

By George S. Hishmeh
Special to the Jordan Times

WASHINGTON — His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton held a one-to-one meeting at the White House Thursday afternoon after an opening session with members of their delegations at the White House on ways to revive the Middle East peace process, Jordanian suggestions for a U.S.-Iraq dialogue and the growing bilateral relations.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani told the Jordan Times that the talks were "very successful." White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry declined to discuss the specific agenda of the two leaders but went on to describe the talks as "a conversation that the president is going to want to keep mostly private."

He confirmed that the U.S. president was making "another difficult and complex peace negotiation effort" and was eager to tap into the knowledge of the Jordanian leaders.

American ideas for reviving the Middle East peace process voiced last January during separate meetings the president had here with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have not had a positive response to date from either side.

The White House did not provide the customary "photo opportunity" when the two leaders would usually take a few questions on any subject from the press while cameramen took pictures. The two

leaders did not even talk to reporters after the session.

The deputy prime minister told the Jordan Times that the discussions covered three basic areas: bilateral relations, the recent Iraqi crisis and the stalled Middle East peace process.

"There was an exchange about His Majesty's call for a dialogue between the United States and Iraq," but the United States neither rejected nor accepted the Jordanian views, "promising to consider the Jordanian ideas."

Dr. Anani explained the motivation behind the Jordanian "initiative" was merely a call on the two sides to begin a dialogue at some point when both sides feel it would be beneficial.

"Jordan believes firmly that there are objective circumstances that will lead to this dialogue in the long run especially after Iraq implements all the U.N. resolutions," he said. "Jordan does not want the region to return to the state of tension every time."

As to the peace process, Dr. Anani said the Monarch explained to his American interlocutors in the Congress, at the State Department and the White House that there is "a very strong perception" in the region that there is an American "double standard."

The Americans were told, he continued, that the U.S. position appears "strong, active and effective in the case of implementing U.N. resolutions on Iraq but when it comes to the implementation of the resolutions concerning the peace process and the



His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton meet in the White House Oval Office on Thursday. The two met privately as the United States pressed its search for ways to revive the stalled Middle East peace (Reuters photo)

accords that have been signed, the American position assumes the role of a messenger between the parties."

"This is not a role that is either active or effective, and is not suitable for a country that is a sponsor of the peace process or at the apex of world power," Dr. Anani said.

He said Jordan would like the United States to undertake "clear initiatives whereby it would assert its own views and convince, especially the Israeli side, that it is serious about the peace process."

Dr. Anani reported that the Clinton administration "is convinced that it should present

American ideas and new proposals" and he reported that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright may either take these proposals to the region or publicise them on some future occasion.

He confirmed reports that some of the American ideas, that are being considered include a meeting between Ms. Albright and the Palestinian and Israeli leaders during her trip to Germany next week. But this, he said, was not final.

The Israeli government has sent two delegations to Washington in the last month — the latest headed by Trade and Industry Minister Nathan Sharansky — appealing apparently without much success to the Clinton administration not to make a public declaration of its blueprint for promoting the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.

Jordan is also asking for an increase in U.S. financial and military aid for the fiscal year 2000 but Dr. Anani could not provide any details. He said the Clinton administration is providing Jordan with an additional \$225 million next year and there seems to be readiness within Congress to go along with this amount.

King Hussein, who began his talks Wednesday with Secretary Albright and U.S. Defence Secretary Cohen after calls on Congressional leaders, is expected to remain in the United States for a few days on a private visit.

Kingdom celebrates Prince Hassan's 51st birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Friday celebrated the 51st birthday of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

Crown Prince Hassan was born in Amman on March 20, 1947, to his father Prince (later King) Talal Ben Abdullah and his mother Princess (later Queen) Zein Al Sharaf Bint Jamil. He is the youngest brother of His Majesty King Hussein (b. Nov. 14, 1935) and HRH Prince Mohammad (b. Oct. 2, 1940), and the older brother of Princess Basma (b. May 11, 1951).

His Royal Highness underwent his primary education in Jordan before going to Summerfields Preparatory School — and then to Harrow — in England. He then went on to Christ Church, Oxford, from where he received a BA (Hon.) in Oriental Studies in 1967. He subsequently received his MA.

On Aug. 28, 1968, His Royal Highness married Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah, who comes from a distinguished family of the Indian subcontinent.

Their Royal Highnesses have four children: Princess Rahma (b. Aug. 13, 1969), Princess Sumaya (b. May 14, 1971), Princess Badiya (b. March 28, 1974), and Prince Rashid (b. May 20, 1979).

In April 1965, His Royal Highness was officially pro-



HRH Crown Prince Hassan

claimed as Crown Prince and heir to the Hashemite Throne of Jordan. Since then he has constantly served as His Majesty King Hussein's closest political advisor, deputy and confidant, as well as Regent in his absence.

During this time, His Royal Highness has also personally initiated and directed a number of Jordanian and international institutes and committees. In Jordan he has chaired the

(Continued on page 7)

Annan calls for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon

Combined agency
dispatches

U.N. SECRETARY General Kofi Annan called Friday for an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon but said discussions behind "closed doors" with both sides are needed to define the modalities of the pull-out.

"I am calling for the implementation of [U.N. Security Council] Resolution 425," which calls for an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, said Mr. Annan after a meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz.

"We did go over Resolution 425 and its possible implementation in all its aspects, but there are two parties [needed] for this, and it is not [Bweiz] alone who can tell what we are going to do or about the

concrete steps," Mr. Annan said in a news conference.

Mr. Annan, who arrived earlier Friday from Cairo, said he will also visit Israel for similar clarifications about the Jewish state's views for Resolution 425, which was adopted in 1978.

The U.N. chief refused to give details about the probable modalities of any eventual Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, stressing that Resolution 425 clearly states "what Israel should do and what Lebanon should do... and we need to look at the reality of today."

He, however, said "there are certain things that are better discussed behind closed doors. I do not believe in television diplomacy."

Mr. Annan also said he hoped for progress on all

(Continued on page 7)

Israel links Lebanon pullback to guarantees

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The majority of the Israeli cabinet Friday said any pullback of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon must be tied to security agreements with Beirut and Damascus, a government official said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the majority of the members of his so-called "security cabinet" meeting here backed proposals by Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai conditioning any pullback on security guarantees. The official said that the ministers rejected any linkage between a pullback from southern Lebanon and a pullback from the Golan Heights, as demanded by Damascus. Mr. Mordechai's plan is for Israel to implement a 1978 U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, on condition that Beirut agrees to security arrangements to protect northern Israel from attacks by guerrillas, notably the Shiite Muslim militia Hizbollah.

The plan, reportedly backed by Mr. Netanyahu, also calls for an agreement with Lebanon to protect members of the South Lebanon Army, which helps Israel guard the buffer zone.

Beirut and Damascus, the principal power-brokers in Lebanon, have already rejected the Mordechai proposal in public statements, saying Resolution 425 requires an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal. Israel captured the Golan from Syria in 1967 and illegally annexed it in 1981.

Clinton eases three sanctions on Cuba

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton decided Friday to ease three U.S. sanctions on Cuba, the White House announced. According to White House spokesman Michael McCurry, Mr. Clinton has decided: - to resume the licensing of direct humanitarian charter flights; - to allow a new licensing arrangement to permit Cuban-Americans and Cubans living in the United States to send humanitarian remittances to families in Cuba at the level of \$300 every three months - the level permitted until 1994; and - to streamline and expedite the issuance of licences for the sale of medical supplies.

Britain holds the rotating EU presidency. The statement said the 15-nation EU had urged both Israel and the Palestinians "not to commit unilateral acts which could prejudice any future solutions" for a Middle East peace settlement.

During his visit to Har Homa, where Israel intends building 6,500 homes for Jews and which is at the centre of the deadlocked peace process with the Palestinians, Mr. Cook met briefly with a Palestinian delegation.

This infuriated Mr. Netanyahu who cancelled a dinner with the foreign secretary.

But the EU welcomed a statement by Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman that relations between Israel and Brussels would not be affected and which welcomed the European involvement in the search for a Middle East peace.

Israeli officials earlier claimed the incident illustrated a pro-Arab bias in Europe and undercut EU ambitions in the peace process, and said the United States was the only viable mediator in the Middle East peace process.

A Foreign Office spokesman in London said that there had been numerous favourable reactions to Mr. Cook's visit. Italian Foreign Minister

Crown Prince receives 'apology' letter from Sharon over Misha'al statement

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Informed sources Friday confirmed local press reports that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has received an "apology letter" by Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon. The senior Likud official reportedly said that his earlier statements on killing a Jordanian citizen were "misunderstood," but the sources could not elaborate any further.

Quoting Israeli television, two Arabic dailies Friday said Mr. Sharon wrote to Prince Hassan that "what he said was misunderstood and he did not mean to threaten the sovereignty of Jordan, its

integrity and its people."

According to the reports, the Israeli minister added that Jordan and Israel "live in harmony and enjoy special relations in the region since they signed peace," in 1994.

Mr. Sharon told Israel's Channel Two television on March 14 that Israel had informed Jordan that it intended to "finish off" the job and assassinate Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al, but not on Jordanian soil.

The Israeli secret service, Mossad, botched an assassination attempt against Mr. Misha'al in Amman last September. The fiasco infuriated Jordanians, and His Majesty King Hussein immediately suspended cooperation in security matters with Tel

Aviv.

Mr. Sharon's remarks came only four days after Jordan resumed official high-level bilateral contacts, with HRH Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Tel Aviv, on March 10.

The day after the minister's statement, Jordan summoned the Israeli Ambassador in Amman Oded Eran and filed a formal protest. "These statements do not tally with statements made by the Israeli government that it was willing to regain understanding with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," said then Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour.

Egypt and the U.S. also condemned the statements.

Butler: UNSCOM work could be finished in less than a year

VIENNA (AFP) — UNSCOM chief Richard Butler said Friday that his disarmament work in Iraq could be finished in less than a year, but only if Baghdad keeps to its commitments made in a deal with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan three weeks ago.

He said the special team of United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) experts and diplomats will work with "lightning speed" if they get full cooperation from Iraq.

"I cannot give a precise date. It is impossible when you don't know... the size of the job," he said in Vienna where he is meeting U.N. and Iraqi officials while en-route to Baghdad.

"But if they give us full cooperation, I would think that about another one year will be needed," he added. "It could be 10

months, it could be 14 months, it relies on Iraqi cooperation," he said.

He welcomed the commitment made by Baghdad to Mr. Annan on Feb. 23, and he said "I will give them a promise in return: they tell us the truth and we would verify it with lightning speed."

Mr. Butler is due to travel to Baghdad Sunday morning and will hold talks from Monday with an Iraqi team headed by Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and he said he's scheduled to leave Baghdad on Thursday.

He said the Feb. 23 deal "brought to an end a period of crisis in our relations with Iraq." "Since then, there has been a new spirit of cooperation between Iraq and UNSCOM. I hope that will continue."

EU brands Israeli settlements 'major obstacle to peace'

LONDON (AFP) — The European Union (EU) on Friday said that Israel's construction of settlements on Palestinian occupied land was illegal and that development at Har Homa in Arab east Jerusalem was "a major obstacle to peace."

Britain issued the statement, drafted by foreign ministers Hubert Vedrine of France and Klaus Kinkel of Germany, following British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's visit to the settlement in Arab east Jerusalem earlier this week which angered Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Britain holds the rotating EU presidency. The statement said the 15-nation EU had urged both Israel and the Palestinians "not to commit unilateral acts which could prejudice any future solutions" for a Middle East peace settlement.

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But the EU welcomed a statement by Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman that relations between Israel and Brussels would not be affected and which welcomed the European involvement in the search for a Middle East peace.

Israeli officials earlier claimed the incident illustrated a pro-Arab bias in Europe and undercut EU ambitions in the peace process, and said the United States was the only viable mediator in the Middle East peace process.

A Foreign Office spokesman in London said that there had been numerous favourable reactions to Mr. Cook's visit. Italian Foreign Minister

Lamberto Dini had telephoned British Prime Minister Tony Blair to express his support in the wake of the foreign secretary's stormy visit to Israel, the spokesman said.

In addition to the Har Homa dispute, Israel has strongly rejected a peace plan being promoted by Britain as the current EU president which demands that Israel carry out "significant" and "urgent" troop withdrawals from the West Bank and halt settlement building.

Some analysts suggested Israel's strong reaction to Mr. Cook was above all a message to the United States, which is considering going public with a similar initiative to break the deadlock.

U.S. President Bill Clinton's proposals reportedly would involve Israel with-

drawing from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank and freezing settlement growth in exchange for specific Palestinian action against armed activists.

EU special envoy for the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos, was due to hold talks in Washington Friday with U.S. officials.

The United States has had little to say about Mr. Cook's visit to Har Homa.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said earlier this week that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had "great confidence in him [Cook] personally and in [his] intentions."

But a U.S. State Department official, speaking privately, said Washington had warned London that the visit was likely to cause controversy.

EU holds conference on Palestinian refugees

LONDON (AFP) — An international conference on the future of the 3.4 million Palestinian refugees scattered across the Middle East will be held Monday and Tuesday in Britain under the aegis of the European Union (EU), London announced Friday.

The meeting, to be held in Warwick, central England, will gather representatives of key refugee donor countries, including members of the EU, the United States, Canada, Japan, Norway, as well as officials from Middle Eastern countries and academics.

The Palestinian National Authority will also be represented, alongside international humanitarian organisations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The conference, titled "Resolving the Palestinian Refugee Problem: What Role for the International Community?", will be hosted by Britain, as current EU president, France and the European Commission, the Foreign Office said in a statement.

Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett and EU special envoy for the Middle East Miguel Moratinos will give speeches at a dinner in Warwick on Monday.

Mr. Fatchett underlined in a statement that the EU would support "whatever arrangements on refugees the Israelis and Palestinians might agree" to in the framework of the peace process.

The Foreign Office minister expressed the hope that the conference would yield "constructive ideas" on how the donor community can help Israel and the Palestinians to implement a solution to the refugee problem.

The EU is the largest donor for displaced Palestinian refugees. It provided 1.6 billion ECUs (\$1.7 billion) between 1993 and 1997, out of total international aid of \$2.8 billion.

Death sentence against Iranian journalist accused of spying lifted

BONN (AFP) — The death sentence handed down by Iranian authorities against Iranian journalist accused of spying, has been lifted, the human rights group Amnesty International said Friday.

A spokesman for Amnesty International in Bonn said Iranian President Mohammad Khatami had intervened on behalf of Mr. Firouzi, an influential former editor of the English-language daily Iran News, and the case would be re-examined by the courts.

Mr. Firouzi, in his early 40s, was sentenced to death in January for spying for a foreign country.

No information was given about the case or the country for which Mr. Firouzi supposedly spied. His arrest and trial, which were not made public, were denounced by several human rights groups who appealed to Mr. Khatami to intervene.

Iran News, founded in 1994, is one of four English-

language newspapers published in Tehran. Said to be close to the foreign ministry, it is widely read by foreign diplomats.

Mr. Firouzi was close to conservative circles, notably Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, whom the journalist accompanied in his last trip to Russia early last year.

In early 1990s, Mr. Firouzi travelled to France at the invitation of the French foreign ministry, where he held talks

with former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

Mr. Giscard d'Estaing chaired the French parliament's foreign affairs committee at the time.

Mr. Firouzi, known for his moderate and modernist views, formerly served as editor-in-chief of another English-language daily, Tehran Times. But he later left the paper along with its managing director, Massoud Soltanifar, and the two founded the Iran News.

Hamas threatens anti-Israeli bombings to win prisoners' release

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Islamist group Hamas threatened Friday to conduct suicide bombings to force Israel to free Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

"The only way to get Palestinian prisoners released from their prisons is to get them out by force, and Hamas will continue to prepare plans for their sake," said Hamas spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantissi.

"Our warriors have in the past conducted operations for their release. These operations may not have seen any results until now, but it is the only way to win their freedom,"

Mr. Rantissi said in a statement received by AFP.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) conducted two suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and September, which killed 21 Israelis, demanding the release of its members held in Israeli jails.

"We have made Israel pay a heavy price and they realise they will pay the price many times over as long as they do not free them," Mr. Rantissi said.

Mr. Rantissi made the comments at a conference organised by Al Damir, an organisation

which advocates the human rights of Palestinian prisoners, held in Gaza City on Wednesday, the statement said.

Israel holds around 3,000 Palestinians in its prisons, including members of Hamas and other groups opposed to the peace process. Over 800 have been held without charge or trial for several years.

Hamas has led a campaign of violence, which has left scores of Israelis dead since 1994, in its opposition to self-rule accords signed by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel.

Austrian premier meets Arafat for talks on peace process

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima met Friday with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and called for implementation of interim peace deals between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The Oslo (self-rule) agreements have to be fulfilled and any solutions cannot go behind the back of the agreements," Mr. Klima told journalists at a joint press conference with Mr. Arafat in Gaza City.

Mr. Klima underlined that the peace process must be based on the "land-for-peace" formula and called for greater steps to "provide security to the benefit of both sides. Terrorism and violence is unacceptable."

Mr. Klima, whose country will take up the rotating presidency of the European Union in June, wrapped up a two-day visit which included talks Thursday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He has taken a low-key approach in his talks with both leaders on the peace process after a visit earlier this week by British Foreign Minister Robin Cook, who raised Israeli outrage when he pressed strongly for Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

The European Union has made public a plan for reviving the long deadlocked peace process, demanding Israel make a "significant" troop withdrawal in the West Bank and calling for a halt to expansion of Jewish settlements.

Mr. Arafat, meanwhile, rejected Israeli attempts to prevent the United States from going public with its own peace plan, which the Palestinians demand be announced quickly although they see it as less forceful against Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu "doesn't have the right to say there shouldn't be a third-party mediator between Israel and the Palestinians," Mr. Arafat said.



NO ENTRANCE TO TOWN: An Israeli soldier on Friday prevents two Palestinians from entering the West Bank town of Dura, where clashes occurred between Israeli troops and stone-throwing Palestinian youths (AFP photo)

Israeli settlers file charges against Palestinian security official

HEBRON (AFP) — Israeli settlers filed charges Thursday against a top Palestinian security official who threatened death to settlers who attacked Palestinians, police officials said.

The charges, which accuse head of Palestinian security forces in the West Bank Colonel Jibril Rajub of "death threats" and "provocation," were filed at the Israeli police headquarters in Hebron.

Col. Rajub said during a

press conference here Monday that "any settler who enters a Palestinian area and attacks Palestinians will not leave alive."

He also announced the suspension of Palestinian police cooperation with Israeli forces in the Hebron region following the killing last week of three Palestinian workers by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in the area.

During unrest that followed the shooting, about 30 settlers from the Jewish

enclave in Hebron charged into the Palestinian-controlled part of the city and stoned residents and homes in the area.

Palestinians responded by stoning the settlers and the Israeli army intervened by firing on the Arabs with rubber-coated bullets, wounding 14 people including eight journalists.

More than 400 Jewish settlers live in the heart of Hebron, a West Bank city of 120,000 Arab inhabitants.

Six Kurdish rebels, two soldiers dead in fighting — agency

ANKARA (R) — Turkish security forces have killed six Kurdish rebels for the loss of two soldiers in fighting in the southern Turkish province of Hatay, state-run Anatolian news agency said Friday.

It did not say when the clash occurred. Security forces were sweeping the area for an estimated 40-strong group of Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas

thought to be still in the province, it said. Hatay, home to many ethnic Arabs, is not a traditional area of activity for the PKK, but the rebels have extended their operations outside the mainly Kurdish southeast in recent years.

More than 27,000 people have died in 13 years of conflict between security forces and the PKK, fighting for self rule in the southeast.

Turkey's government needs no push to fall — Baykal

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish left-wing leader who holds the balance of power in parliament said Friday he had no plans to topple Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz because the minority government would collapse on its own.

"There is no question of us taking a decision to bring down the government," Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal told Reuters.

Although nominally in the opposition, Mr. Baykal's 55-deputy CHP props up Mr. Yilmaz's coalition for key votes in Turkey's 550-seat parliament.

Mr. Baykal said the conservative-led coalition, under pressure from the powerful army over Islamist activism and

labouring to overcome economic woes, was imploding of its own accord.

"The government is collapsing, melting away, ending. I don't have to do anything. I don't see the need for us to present a censure motion," he said.

Mr. Baykal, a former foreign minister, was quoted by the Hürriyet daily Friday as calling for an end to Mr. Yilmaz's nine-month coalition.

Mr. Yilmaz is embroiled in a public row with the secularist armed forces over who should run a fight against Islamist activism.

Compounding Mr. Yilmaz's headaches, annual inflation runs at just under 100 per cent and public workers unions are discontent.

Turkey's army sees its duty as protecting the overwhelmingly Muslim country's secularist system against Islamists.

Mr. Yilmaz has said that job is the government's and accused the army of hijacking the Islamist debate to grab more power for itself.

"[The government] has begun to unravel because of its own failures and the disputes between state institutions," Mr. Yilmaz said.

The leftist leader, a staunch secularist, is often tipped to do well at the next general elections by garnering support from voters uneasy at both the army's role in government and the main opposition Islamists.

350,000 people facing famine in Sudan — U.N. agency

GENEVA (AFP) — Sudan faces a worsening food shortage with 350,000 people threatened by famine and death from starvation, the World Food Programme warned here Friday.

"Malnutrition cases have risen sharply and people will die of hunger within a few months if the international community does not react," Christiane Berthiaume said.

WFP officials on the ground in the hard-hit south report that Sudanese are digging up soil in the hopes of finding a few grains of cereal.

Locals have been driven to boiling leaves which take hours to cook, rivers that once yielded fish have dried up and animals have had to be slaughtered earlier than planned, the WFP said.

The WFP, a U.N. agency, was given authorisation to airlift in food starting Feb. 26 but flights are limited to six locations in the southern province of Bahr Al Ghazal. "This is not enough. We have asked for access to 21 locations in the Bahr Al Ghazal province," Ms. Berthiaume said.

Beginning last month, some 481 tonnes of food have been flown in to help 105,000 people, while 356 tonnes have been delivered by lorry.

With two successive years of disastrous harvests due to drought and fighting, the population in southern Sudan is dependent on foreign food hand-outs.

The crop planting season is near, but there are no seeds, the WFP said.

The WFP at the start of March appealed for \$59 million to help southern Sudan, where Christian and animist forces have been fighting the regimes of the Muslim-dominated north since 1983.

Israel authorises thousands more work permits for Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has authorised thousands of more permits for Palestinians to work on its territory, the defence ministry announced Thursday.

The new authorisation will enable Israel to increase "by several thousand" the some 50,000 Palestinians who now hold work permits, a defence ministry spokesman, Shlomo Dror, told AFP.

"We hope to reach a figure of 70,000" Palestinian workers with permits "in the months immediately ahead," he said.

Mr. Dror estimated that between 30,000 and 50,000

Palestinians currently work in Israel illegally. He said that Palestinians aged 23, who are married and who met "security criteria" can obtain a work permit. Previously, the minimum age was 25.

Some 1,500 Palestinian businessmen and traders are sought to receive permits to enter Israel or travel between the West Bank and Gaza. The increase will bring the number of such businessmen and traders to 13,500.

"Our goal is to convince Israeli employers to hire Palestinians rather than illegal immigrants, so as to improve the economic situation in the

[Palestinian] territories," Mr. Dror said.

Some 100,000 immigrants from Thailand, the Philippines and Romania are currently employed in Israel, along with an additional 100,000 foreigners who are working illegally.

The ministry of labour has sought to reduce the number of illegal immigrants over the last months by increasing deportations to free up work for Palestinians.

Mr. Dror said "our task is made easier by the fact that Palestinian workers enable employers to earn an average of 300 dollars more per month than do immigrants."

Pentagon hacker wins praise from Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AP) — An 18-year-old Israeli master hacker accused of having launched the most organised attack ever on the Pentagon's computer system earned praise Thursday from Israel's prime minister.

"Damn good," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said when asked what he thought of the hacker, who was put under house arrest Wednesday and had his computer taken away. "Very dangerous, too," Mr. Netanyahu added quickly.

The suspect, who calls himself "The Analyst" and was

identified by the U.S. Justice Department as Ehud Tenenbaum, was questioned Thursday for more than 14 hours by a special Israeli police anti-hacker unit.

Police said he might be recalled for further questioning later. A police spokeswoman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the investigation was complex and "might take some time." No charges have been filed.

Israel's Channel Two Television said four FBI investigators came to Israel earlier this week

and provided information that led to the arrest. The investigators wanted to question the suspect along with Israeli police, but his lawyer refused, the report said.

Police Brigadier General Elihu Ben-Onn said the suspect was cooperating with investigators, who believe he was not seeking personal gain.

"This guy didn't act for what we call criminal motives, only for his curiosity, his ego, or any other motive — not for money," Brig. Gen. Ben-Onn said. "He's not so proud of what he's done."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Cartoon — Jonny Quest
16:30 Soccer match — Real Madrid vs. Bayer Leverkusen (recorded)
18:10 Square One TV
18:40 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — L'oeuf de Colomb
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Quiz Show — You Bet Your Life
20:00 Cinema, Cinema
20:30 Prism
21:20 Drama — Sirens
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "This Child is Mine"
23:59 Comedy — "Are You Being Served?"
00:30 End of TX.

PRAYER TIMES

04:18 Fajr
05:35 Sunrise/Duha
11:43 Dhuhur
15:10 Asr
17:51 Maghreb
19:08 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4652785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5683404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4623541
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church 771331

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
It will be relatively cold, skies partly cloudy, temperatures rising slightly, winds westerly to westerly moderate, with a chance of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. In Aqaba, skies will be sunny to partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Amman 05/13
Aqaba 09/20
Deserts 02/15
Jordan Valley 09/20

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Muhdiss Mazharah 820425
Dr. Wissam Hazyin 748563

WEATHER

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Home News

Queen meets v

Queen Mary II met with Hillary Clinton at the White House in Washington D.C. where they discussed a range of issues including the Middle East peace process. The Queen is on a tour of the region and will be visiting Jordan in the coming days.

Eighteen plays

During internati

Eighteen plays will be performed during the international festival in Jordan.

350,000 people facing famine in Sudan — U.N. agency

GENEVA (AFP) — Sudan faces a worsening food shortage with 350,000 people threatened by famine and death from starvation, the World Food Programme warned here Friday.

Israeli settlers file charges against Palestinian security official

HEBRON (AFP) — Israeli settlers filed charges Thursday against a top Palestinian security official who threatened death to settlers who attacked Palestinians, police officials said.

Six Kurdish rebels, two soldiers dead in fighting — agency

ANKARA (R) — Turkish security forces have killed six Kurdish rebels for the loss of two soldiers in fighting in the southern Turkish province of Hatay, state-run Anatolian news agency said Friday.

Turkey's government needs no push to fall — Baykal

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish left-wing leader who holds the balance of power in parliament said Friday he had no plans to topple Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz because the minority government would collapse on its own.

Pentagon hacker wins praise from Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AP) — An 18-year-old Israeli master hacker accused of having launched the most organised attack ever on the Pentagon's computer system earned praise Thursday from Israel's prime minister.

Death sentence against Iranian journalist accused of spying lifted

BONN (AFP) — The death sentence handed down by Iranian authorities against Iranian journalist accused of spying, has been lifted, the human rights group Amnesty International said Friday.

Hamas threatens anti-Israeli bombings to win prisoners' release

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Islamist group Hamas threatened Friday to conduct suicide bombings to force Israel to free Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

Austrian premier meets Arafat for talks on peace process

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima met Friday with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and called for implementation of interim peace deals between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel authorises thousands more work permits for Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has authorised thousands of more permits for Palestinians to work on its territory, the defence ministry announced Thursday.

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
09:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Milan Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bombay (RJ)
20:20 Lamaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
07:00 Beirut (RJ)
14:15 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GP)
14:45 Riyadh (SV)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
23:35 Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (AZ)
04:20 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:50 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Beirut (RJ)
10:05 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
10:40 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)
19:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 Riyadh (SV)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30 Athens (OA)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
23:30 London, Beirut (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
03:25 Rome (AZ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information

Queen meets with Hillary Clinton

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor on Thursday met with Hillary Clinton at the White House in Washington D.C., where they discussed a range of issues that included the Middle East peace process, the important role of women in the region in "promoting justice, reconciliation and peace," and Mrs. Clinton's upcoming trip to the region and Jordan, according to a press release Friday.

Queen Noor, who is the chair of the United Nations University/International Leadership Academy Advisory Board, had extended an invitation to

Mrs. Clinton to participate as a speaker in the International Leadership Programme. Mrs. Clinton expressed her interest in contributing to the programme and participating in coming sessions with current and emerging world leaders, the statement concluded.

Eighteen plays to be presented during international theatre festival

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Wednesday will see the start of the busiest time of year for Jordanian theatre due to the opening of the Amman International Theatre Festival. Kicking off at 5:00 p.m. with a parade from Medina Circle, participants are scheduled to arrive at the Royal Cultural Centre at around 6:00 p.m. for a reception. The first show, "As if..." by Jordanian actress, writer and director Ghada Saba will be shown in the Studio stage at 7:00 p.m., and at 8:30 p.m., Sawson Darwaseh's "Three Boxes Memory" will begin in the main hall.

version of "Othello" to folkloric music shows, from nine different countries will be presented. In addition to five Jordanian groups, Palestinian, Egyptian, Algerian and Tunisian performers will represent the Arab World, and groups from Sweden, France, India and Indonesia will make this a truly eclectic mix. All the plays will be performed in the language of the country of origin.

In total, 250 people from around 30 different countries are expected to take part in the festival. Apart from the actual performances, they will be participating in a number of workshops and seminars taking place on various aspects of drama, including theatrical music, lighting, children's theatre, Arab theatre in general, and the establishment of an independent theatre groups network.

Committee announces vocational awards for 1998

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arbitrators Committee for the 1998 Al Hassan Bin Talal Award for Academic Excellence has issued its report on awards for the national vocational and technical education institutions. The committee, which is chaired by HRH Princess Sarvath, said 17 applications were submitted this year.

The basic criteria for evaluating the projects were set as follows by the Arbitrators Committee:

1. Distinction:
- a) The project should be a new or developed idea.
- b) The project should have been tried and tested with positive results.
- c) The project should present an exceptional product and surpass conventional methods.
- d) The project should contribute significantly to the development of both teachers and students.

Two: After thorough discussions followed by field visits, the committee concluded the following:

- 1) The First Place Award will not be granted this year, because none of the projects showed the excellence or exceptional creativity required to meet the high standards set by the award.
- 2) The Second Place Award will be granted to "Developing Support Services for Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises," submitted by the Vocational Training Corporation.
- 3) The Third Place Award will be granted to the "Assembly of an Electrical Trainer," submitted by Prince Abdullah Bin Al Hussein Vocational Secondary School in Ajloun.

The project was the result of a personal effort to develop a device for basic and practical electrical training in vocational schools. By developing and implementing this device, the results showed an increase in equipment life span, less material wastage and use of materials and resources available locally. The final outcome aids in saving financial expenditure and eliminating the need for foreign imports.

As a result, this trainer has been adopted for use by a number of vocational schools and training centres operating under the Ministry of Education. The award was established in 1995 to encourage academic, scientific, and technological activities in all institutions involved in education and training.

Murdered woman, children buried

AMMAN (J.T.) — The bodies of Fasl Ahmad Khamaiseh and her four children were laid to rest Friday at noon in the town of Sammu in the northern Irbid governorate. The 26-year-old woman and her children, all under eight years of age, were stabbed to death Wednesday by her 36-year-old husband, identified by the police only as A.K.

Rifai returns from meeting in Sanaa

AMMAN (Petra) — Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai returned home Friday after taking part in the 31st meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU), which was held in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa.

Mr. Rifai met with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and conveyed condolences from His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on the death of former Yemeni President Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Iryani.

He also held talks with Yemeni Premier Faraj Ben Ghanem on Jordanian-Yemeni cooperation and the APU meeting.

At the meeting, Mr. Rifai delivered an address stressing the importance of Arab solidarity in dealing with the obstacles facing the Arab and Muslim nations, as well as the latest developments in the Middle East, particularly the peace process.

Higher temperatures, less rain forecast

Weather-related accidents leave nine dead

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Meteorology Friday forecast that temperatures will gradually rise over the next few days with no possibility of heavy rain. A department official told the Jordan Times that the low pressure cell which affected Jordan and the eastern Mediterranean region Wednesday, and Thursday has now moved to the northeast. The intensity of the cold fronts accompanying

the depression will gradually diminish, he added. On Saturday, the weather will continue to be cold, with temperatures reaching a high of 12° C and a low of 2° C, with a chance of rain in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom.

Temperatures will continue a gradual rise Sunday and beyond, the official said. Meanwhile, local press reports quoting Civil Defence Department sources said the recent blizzard and rains caused 149 road accidents and other incidents that resulted in the death of nine people.

The reports spoke of numerous instances of flooded homes in low-lying areas, with civil defence personnel called on to offer assistance. According to these reports, the rain has pushed the amount of water behind the country's dams to more than 120 million cubic metres.

U.S. press group asks for intervention on behalf of journalists facing prosecution

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has this week called on His Majesty King Hussein to intervene on behalf of Jordanian journalists who face prosecution for their published work. In a letter addressed to the King, the CPJ expressed deep concern over recent cases of what it called "government interference with independent journalism," which it said "violated international standards for a free press."

The letter, made available to the Jordan Times via e-mail, proposed several recommendations "aimed at safeguarding press freedoms in Jordan and bringing Jordan's practices in accordance with international standards for a free press."

The recommendations included halting all criminal prosecution and detention of journalists in response to their published work and an end to prosecutions of journalists under statutes of the penal code. It also recommended an end to censorship of foreign publications, and a guarantee that any future amendments to the press law would preserve media pluralism.

"We are concerned that the threat of detention and criminal action inhibits the ability of the press to work freely," the CPJ statement said. Several journalists have been sentenced, detained or interrogated in the past few weeks. They include four journalists from Shihab weekly who were sentenced to six months imprisonment and a fine of JD1,000 each for an article and a caricature that the court found slanderous to Islamist Deputy Mohammad Ra'fat, who made a controversial visit to Israel in December.



ACTING FM MEETS WITH GENERAL: Acting Foreign Minister Talal Sata'an Al Hassan receives Brigadier General R.M. Kubalati, head of the observer mission in Jerusalem on the occasion of the end of his tour of duty (Petra photo)

Internet users e-mailing in Arabic face mixed results

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — E-mailing in Arabic script has made a mixed debut on the Jordanian on-line scene with the introduction of an Arabic conference to the array of available conferences offered by a local Bulletin Board Service (BBS).

"Arabi 98" is the brainchild of "Arabia," a conference moderator on Jordan's leading BBS, National Equipment and Technical Services (NETS). From this initiative, Arabic on NETS took off as its subscribers e-mailed "kull am wenta bkhair" (Happy Eid), typed in Arabic script, two months ago.

At present, subscribers from the ranks of the 3,500-strong BBS e-mail digitised Arabic times, works by the famed Arab bard Nizar Qabbani and simple messages presenting jokes or comments to the conference. "This [Arabic] is our language and we should do all we can to preserve it," said Sahar Aloul, NETS' content manager.

However, it appears that posting messages in Arabic has hit a snag due to technical limitations. Unlike text presented in the Latin-based 26-character set, media written in Arabic is not portable between the two major platforms, Microsoft Windows and Macintosh.

Zarqa 'thieves market' popular despite suspicions

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — Souq Al Haramieh (thieves market), a complex of 30 stores located in downtown Zarqa, sells used or possibly stolen goods and is frequented by 2,000 people daily, Zarqa residents and market owners say. The market has become popular because commodities ranging from electric appliances to nails and nuts can be found there and are sold at prices far lower than in other stores, according to customers.

They said the owners of the stores belong to the same family and do not allow anybody outside the family into the business. "We sell scrap items and used home appliances. We buy from the public but we do not trade in stolen goods, as many believe," according to

one of the owners, who preferred anonymity. But according to local Zarqa residents, the police often visit these stores after a robbery is reported to determine if the goods reported stolen turn up there. One customer claimed that the complex is called the thieves market due to the fact that many robbers and persons wanted by the police or homeless people used to sleep in it.

Another shopkeeper claimed that his store's goodwill is worth JD13,000 because of the numerous customers and the good business he is doing. But he too strongly denied that he deals in stolen goods. The owner said that if a person offered him a JD150 television set for JD50, he would decline to buy it because it would probably be stolen.

what's going on

CHARITY BAZAAR
* First charity bazaar by Na'in Society at its headquarters in Hashmi Al Shamali, Zaghari quarters, Baitha Street, until March 21 (including handicrafts, embroidery, pottery and others).

EXHIBITIONS
* Works by late Iraqi artist Seddiq Ahmad at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5693027), until March 29.
* Works by Sana' Kayyali at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 5681303/4), until March 26. (Proceeds will go to Al Quds Al Sharif Defending Association).
* Works by Jordanian artist Yousef Baddawi at Darat Al Fumam, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 9 (Tel. 4643251/2).

Italian violinist, pianist to perform in Amman

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Italian violin master Massimo de Bonifis is back in Amman for another series of performances that promises to be at least as thrilling as his memorable duet here with guitarist Giuseppe Petrella in October 1996.

Under the patronage of Hind Sharif Nasser, two recitals will take place, with Maestro de Bonifis on violin and Annamaria Strano on piano. Both events are presented by the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Italian Embassy in Amman.

The first recital will be on Monday at the concert hall of the Union Bank in Shmeisani and the second on Tuesday at Romero restaurant in Jabal Amman, 3rd circle area. The artists will play works by Mozart, Antonin Dvorak, Robert Schumann, Gaetano Donizetti, Johannes Brahms, Fritz Kreisler, Isaac Albeniz, Caspar Cassado and Astor Piazzolla.

In addition to an interpretation reflecting the exquisite finesse and sensitivity that are well known to Italian musicians, Annamaria Strano and Massimo de Bonifis will present a particularly interesting transcription of pieces by Spanish composer Albeniz and Argentinean jazz-tango "wizard" Piazzolla. Originally written for the bandoneon (accordion), Piazzolla's contemporary works benefit from a beautiful rendering on the violin by Mr. de Bonifis.



Massimo de Bonifis



Annamaria Strano

German nuclear shipment sparks huge protests

WALHEIM, Germany (R) — A controversial rail shipment of nuclear waste, protected by a huge police presence, made its way through Germany Friday after being repeatedly held up during the night by anti-nuclear activists.

Protesters chained themselves to the tracks and a policeman died as one of Europe's biggest ecological protests in recent years swung into action.

Thousands of police have been drafted in to secure the passage of six containers of spent nuclear waste cells from power plants in southern Germany to a storage depot several hundred kilometres to the north.

Anti-nuclear groups said around 5,000 protesters had gathered by the storage depot in Ahaus, to the north of the city of Cologne, awaiting the arrival of the consignment later in the day.

Demonstrations outside the depot early Friday were broken up by police, who have cordoned off a 500-metre wide no-go corridor

for the train over the final 12 km to the dump. Around 150 protesters were taken into custody early Friday.

The rail shipment, which set out overnight from a station in the southern town of Walheim, was interrupted after just 10 km when a handful of demonstrators chained themselves to the track near the town of Lauffen.

It had to be diverted onto a parallel stretch of rail further up after one protester had cemented himself to the track.

Earlier, one of the policemen involved in the security operation died when he was hit by an oncoming train just outside the southern town of Wuerzburg. Officials said the accident was not in any way caused by protesters.

The waste shipment has sparked a political row in Germany, which relies on nuclear power for around a third of its overall energy requirements. Surveys consistently show a large number of Germans uneasy about nuclear power.

Wolfgang Clement, state premier-designate of north Rhine-Westphalia, the Social Democrat-controlled state in which Ahaus is located, called the shipments a provocation and "irresponsible madness".

Politicians for Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) hit out at the opposition SPD for trying to make political capital out of the issue.

"This is pure party propaganda — they're electioneering," said Helmut Linsen, parliamentary chairman of the local CDU party in north Rhine-Westphalia, on Deutschlandradio Berlin.

Environment Minister Angela Merkel said nuclear waste shipments across Germany would be needed for years to come because of a nuclear policy laid down in 1979 by the federal government and Germany's regions, including those that are SPD-controlled.

Thursday, the anti-nuclear activists were caught off guard when authorities began to move waste con-

tainers out of several south German locations to a rail collection point in Walheim several days earlier than expected.

Behind a force of more than 4,000 police, three containers were moved in flat-bed trucks from the Neckarwestheim power plant near Stuttgart past 300 demonstrators.

Along with three other containers from the Gundremmingen plant in nearby Bavaria, they then started their rail journey to Ahaus. The journey was expected to take between 11 and 13 hours.

Germany's anti-nuclear lobby has in the past organised huge protests numbering in the hundreds of thousands against the transport of nuclear waste.

A year ago, about 30,000 police were deployed in Germany's biggest post-world war two security operation to guard a shipment of nuclear waste to the Gorleben storage depot against protesters who have been prepared to sabotage trains in their cause.



German riot police arrest and remove an anti-nuclear protestor from the railways to the nuclear waste storage facility of the north-western German town of Ahaus. Some 30,000 policemen are guarding the rail transport of six special containers called CASTOR with spent nuclear fuel on its about 800-km-long way (Reuters photo)

Nuclear powers sharpen opposition to ASEAN nuclear-free zone

NASUGBU, Philippines (AFP) — Nuclear powers are objecting to a proposed protocol asking them to recognise a nuclear weapons-free zone in South East Asia, an official said here Friday.

Philippine Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs Juanito Harasa said there were calls from the nuclear powers to delete certain provisions in the protocol, adding "they consider this particular matter a fundamental issue."

Mr. Harasa, who heads the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) working group discussing the protocol in this town outside Manila, said ASEAN foreign ministers were steadfast in refusing to revise the proposed treaty declaring South East Asia a nuclear weapons-free zone.

Mr. Harasa said the results of the group's meeting, which is trying to forge a protocol to get the nuclear powers to accede to the zone, would be submitted to an ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting to be held here this weekend.

The main objection was to the "negative security assurance" in the protocol, barring the nuclear powers from using nuclear weapons in South East Asia, Mr. Harasa said.

There were also objections to having the nuclear weapons-free area include the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of ASEAN

countries, a move that would hamper vessels carrying nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel or waste.

EEZs of ASEAN states cover wide areas of the sea and setting restrictions over them could hamper freedom of navigation.

Mr. Harasa would not say which nuclear powers had raised objections but said replies had been received from the United States, Britain and France. They were still waiting to hear from China and Russia.

Sources involved in the talks said "France has the most hardline position" in objecting to certain provisions of the protocol.

The United States and Britain, while also having their own objections, "are not as forthright," the sources said.

They added that China was insisting the protocol should state that it would not affect sovereignty claims over certain territories.

China has outstanding sovereignty disputes with various South East Asian countries over territories in the South China Sea.

The sources said the working group would advise the ASEAN senior officials to move forward with the plan despite the opposition, but continue consulting the nuclear powers.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

1,000 firefighters scramble to curb fires ravaging Brazilian state

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — One thousand firemen soon will be battling blazes ravaging Brazil's northern state of Roraima, which already have charred a territory the size of Belgium, authorities said Thursday.

"Currently there are 400 men fighting the fires but within a week, we will have 1,000, as they come in from other states and countries," Brazil's regional police coordinator Fernando Brandao said.

Argentina decided to send in about 100 firefighters and aircraft, and Venezuela was drawing up a contingency plan as the flames reached within 50 kilometres of its southern border.

Venezuela's civil defence set up a firefighting command centre in the border town of Santa Elena de Uairen, but

officials said only rain could solve the problem in the immediate future.

Matthew Lena of the humanitarian group Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) said by phone the situation was alarming, and threatened the native Yanomami people, their lands and the animals on which they depend to live.

Having triggered a prolonged drought, "the El Niño weather phenomenon has maximised the effect of the blazes," said Reinaldo Barbosa, an expert at the National Institute of Amazon Research in Boa Vista, Roraima's capital.

Roraima Governor Neudo Ribeiro Campos declared a state of emergency Jan. 22. He said about 20,000 head of cattle have died of hunger and thirst.

RSPCA uncovers appalling conditions for animals in European zoos

LONDON (AFP) — An undercover investigation of European zoos has found hundreds of animals being kept in "appalling conditions," according to Britain's Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Friday.

The probe was conducted by the RSPCA which urged the European Union to set tighter welfare standards.

RSPCA undercover inspectors visited 15 zoos in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain at the end of last year.

Their findings, published in a report entitled "European Zoos — Behind the Bars," revealed:

— Animals in direct view of their predators at the Menagerie du Jardin des Plantes, Paris. Water deer were watched by wolves.

— Distressed tigers pacing in cramped enclosures in Limburg Zoo, Genk, Belgium.

— A tiger pacing on a raised platform in Parc Zoologique, Paris, in sparse surroundings and little room to exercise.

— Rhinos, leopards, tigers,

elephants, baboons and pumas at many zoos were found distressed, pacing continuously and swinging their heads.

Earlier this year, members of the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly for a directive to protect animals from suffering in zoos throughout Europe.

The RSPCA wants European ministers to adopt a directive setting minimum welfare standards as well as a licensing and inspection scheme.

Any animal found distressed, sick or injured would get immediate attention, and their accommodation would have to provide stimulation and exercise space.

David Bowles, head of the RSPCA's international department, said: "We have seen evidence of appalling conditions in many of Europe's zoos, and clearly a binding directive is the only way to regulate standards and prevent suffering."

He said Britain's zoos were among the best in Europe because of existing strict legislation.

45 killed in Afghan airlines jet crash

SHARKI BARATAYI, Afghanistan (AFP) — All 45 people on board an Afghan Airlines Boeing 727 were killed when the jet plane crashed in bad weather here south of the capital Kabul, officials said Friday.

Rescue workers found the wreckage on Sharki Baratayi mountain 15 kilometres south of Kabul, but their grisly job of recovering the bodies and black box flight recorder was hampered by land mines in the area.

An Ariana Afghan Airlines official at the site said the plane crashed at 2:00 p.m. (10:30 GMT) Thursday as it hit a bank of cloud, rain and sleet near the capital killing 13 crew and 32 passengers.

"There were 45 people on board including 13 crew members and they have all been killed," said Mohammad Sharif, an employee of Ariana Airlines who was busy searching for the black box.

An AFP journalist at the site counted 32 charred and badly mutilated bodies being carried down the mountain and a further 35 bags of body parts including charred heads and limbs of the ill-fated passengers.

The rescue workers, who were mostly Taleban soldiers and Ariana employees, carried the victims down the mountainside in blankets, sheets of plastic, duty free carrier bags and cotton sheets.

Unlike the passengers' corpses, there was little remaining of the plane, which smashed into the mountain around 100 metres below the summit, leaving a black scorch mark around 200 metres wide and 100 metres high.

Further down a gorge, a tyre could be seen but rescue workers were reluctant to approach it due to the proliferation of land mines in the area.

On the two-hour walk up the mountain to the crash site — which remained engulfed in mist and heavy rain —

several Soviet anti-personnel mines laid to protect Kabul from attack were spotted close to the main path.

The plane — which was one of Ariana's four functioning Boeing 727s — was on its way back to Kabul from Mecca to pick up more Muslim pilgrims for the annual hajj.

There were no details on who the passengers were, and if any Taleban officials — who frequently use the service from their southern base to the capital — were on board.

An Ariana official at the site, however, said there was a possibility that Taleban officials may have been among the casualties as many Taleban pick-up trucks had rushed to the scene.

Officials said the plane had early Thursday flown into Kandahar from the city of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to let off passengers, and then resumed its journey to the capital Kabul.

Ariana airlines, which is now run by the strict Muslim Taleban militia, still operates an ageing fleet of aircraft, all purchased to service the country's booming trade and tourist industries before the Soviet invasion of 1979.

Until the end of last year the planes were serviced by Air France in Toulouse and the cash-strapped airline has since been in search of a new maintenance contract.

Ariana currently operates services to the Gulf cities of Dubai and Sharjah, Amritsar in India and occasionally to various European destinations for cargo flights.

However the airline has recently been hit by a series of serious accidents. In January, an Antonov 32 plane on a domestic route crashed in bad weather on Pakistani soil killing all 80 on board.

Last year a Tupolev jet crashed on a training flight in the eastern city of Jalalabad, killing five crew members.

Two more members of Basque separatist commando unit arrested

MADRID (AFP) — Two more members of a commando unit linked to the armed Basque separatist group ETA were arrested Friday, bringing to 13 the number of people held in the case, the interior ministry said.

The latest arrests were of Jose Ramon Alcerreka Bastarrarena and his daughter Aran. The pair were nabbed in Anzuola, located in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa, a ministry spokesman said.

Interior Minister Jaime Mayor Oreja announced Thursday that authorities had smashed the commando unit called "Araba" by arresting 11 people and seizing various weapons and about 100 kilograms of explosives.

Police uncovered another stash of weapons Friday in a garage in Anzuola, the ministry said, adding it had been kept by two of the 13 arrested.

The arms included 15 kilograms of the explosive Amosol, 3.5 kilograms of chloralite, six sections of grenade launchers, a rifle, ammunition, remote control devices, and false vehicle number plates.

A series of attacks was being planned on councillors from the ruling conservative Popular Party (PP) in the Burgos area, the Madrid daily ABC reported Friday.

PP representatives are a regular ETA target. Since last July four councillors have been killed.

The "Araba" cell is blamed for at least four bomb attacks since May 1997, none of which have claimed victims.

King Norodom Sihanouk has requested a pardon for two criminal convictions by a Phnom Penh court this month. The pardon is necessary for the exiled prince to return to Cambodia and participate in July's scheduled elections.

King Sihanouk said the pardon will be useless because a damages order of \$54 million against the prince remains in force, but he asked the co-premiers for their opinion.

A response to the king was drafted Thursday but had not been signed Friday.

Prak Sokhon said Hun Sen had agreed to the

Amnesty condemns arrests, beatings ahead of Pope's visit to Nigeria

LONDON (AFP) — Amnesty International said Friday arrests and beatings of human rights activists had continued in Nigeria even as the country prepared to welcome Pope John Paul II this weekend.

The human rights watchdog said "the Pope's impending visit has not been enough to stop the Nigerian authorities from brutally suppressing dissenting opinions in the country."

The Pope is to visit the West African country from Saturday through Monday. "If the government can go on arresting and intimidating people just for attending seminars or marches while the media spotlight is focused on Nigeria, it sends a very clear message to the Nigerian people — that fundamental freedoms are still not tolerated even during the government's proclaimed 'transition to democracy'."

It said on March 3 a human rights activist, lawyer Olu Aghakoba was beaten and gun-butt in the face by police when he attempted to negotiate with police officers. He was charged with public order offences, with about 30 others, for organising a pro-democracy march in Lagos.

Both Mr. Aghakoba and lawyer Femi Falana, who was released earlier this week from six days detention without charge for attending a labour seminar, were defence lawyers in the trials which resulted in the execution of rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni tribesmen in November 1995, said Amnesty.

This prompted Nigeria's suspension from the 54-nation Commonwealth.

Amnesty said government officials have warned journalists not to speculate about the secret treason trial which began in February of

deputy head of state General Oladipo Diya and 25 others. It said that since 1983, when the military overthrew the last elected civilian government, nearly 90 people had been executed in what it termed "grossly unfair and politically motivated trials."

It said the military authorities had openly threatened the press not to risk facing the same fate as four journalists jailed for 15 years for reporting gross injustices of the last treason trials by special military tribunal in 1995.

Amnesty said it had been appealing for urgent medical care for some of the 1995 treason prisoners and other prisoners of conscience detained in what it said were "life threatening conditions."

One of the prisoners, former deputy head of state Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, died in prison in December.

Pardon for deposed Cambodian prince remains on hold

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A pardon for deposed Cambodian co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh remained on hold Friday as government officials tried to contact First Prime Minister Ung Huot to give a verdict.

Ung Huot, the foreign minister who replaced the prince as powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen's coalition partner last August, is abroad and unable to be contacted directly, a senior Hun Sen adviser said.

"We have no direct contact with him," Prak Sokhon said. "We are trying to contact him through a third party. As far as we can tell he has not got the messages, so we will have to wait."

King Norodom Sihanouk has requested a pardon for two criminal convictions by a Phnom Penh court this month. The pardon is necessary for the exiled prince to return to Cambodia and participate in July's scheduled elections.

King Sihanouk said the pardon will be useless because a damages order of \$54 million against the prince remains in force, but he asked the co-premiers for their opinion.

A response to the king was drafted Thursday but had not been signed Friday.

Prak Sokhon said Hun Sen had agreed to the

wording of the response but would not sign it until Ung Huot had also approved it.

He would not reveal details of the response, which the king has predicted will not meet his requirements to grant the pardon.

Ung Huot, who is believed to be in Thailand on a private visit, is not expected to return to Cambodia until at least Sunday, according to an official with his new Reastr Niyum (Populism) party.

King Sihanouk demanded the prime ministers specifically agree to the pardon in writing.

But he predicted they would say either that the matter was for him to decide alone or that a pardon should not be granted unless the prince admits his guilt.

"In these two cases, I will decide nothing at all. The royal pardon will not be granted," the ailing monarch said in an interview with staff in Beijing where he is now in seclusion.

In addition, the king slammed the Japanese-sponsored peace plan under which the pardon is to be granted saying it had succeeded only in unjustly making his son a "double criminal."

The only result obtained by the Japanese plan is to make His Royal

Highness Norodom Ranariddh a double criminal, which is an injustice to him," the king said.

"In all ways, the famous Japanese plan can only fail through."

Wednesday, a Phnom Penh court sentenced the prince in absentia to 30 years jail for colluding with the Khmer Rouge to topple the government. Earlier, he was sentenced to five years for weapons smuggling. Wednesday's court also ordered the prince to pay more than \$54 million in compensation for damage the government said resulted from his attempt to stage a coup d'état.

The king said the damages would keep the prince out of the election regardless of a pardon.

"In effect, everything has been done and forecast to absolutely prevent Prince Ranariddh from standing in the 1998 elections because he must still pay astronomical sums (for) the 'broken pots' of July 5 and 6, 1997," he said. "If he does not have enough money to pay the colossal price for all these 'broken pots' — broken by others — he will be sent to prison if he dares to return home."

Justice Minister Chem Sponou confirmed that the pardon would not cover the compensation and said if the prince refused to pay, he would be sent to prison.

Curry restaurant too clean, city council rules out

LONDON (R) — The owner of a British curry restaurant spent £100,000 (\$170,000) brightening up his establishment only to be told the bricks were too clean and out of step with the neighbours.

Islington Council in north London told Mofakharul Shahin he should blacken the bricks with soot to make the curry house blend in with the rest of the terrace, the

Times newspaper reported Friday.

Mr. Shahin has so far refused to comply.

"They want it to be dirty and scruffy like other buildings in the street. Can they be serious? Do they really want me to cover the brickwork with soot?" he complained.

Mr. Shahin bought the premises for £90,000 when they were derelict,

flooded with sewage and inhabited by rats and pigeons. He renovated the place and replaced the decaying facade with antique bricks.

A council spokesman said: "One of the things we try to do in Islington is try and maintain a certain harmonious look. He ignored that. It doesn't matter where the bricks come from, they did not blend in."

Former S. Korean intelligence agency head faces arrest

SEOUL (AFP) — The former head of South Korea's intelligence agency was taken into custody Friday on charges of masterminding a smear campaign against President Kim Dae-Jung, prosecution officials said.

Kwon Young-Hae, former director of the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP), the Korean CIA, presented himself at the Seoul district prosecution office at 3:45 (0645 GMT), the television said.

"Investigators are now questioning him," Kim Won-Chi, head of the Southern Seoul prosecution office, told journalists.

Prosecutors are expected to seek an arrest warrant for Mr. Kwon Saturday following questioning.

Some 50 television cameramen and press who had been tipped off to await Mr. Kwon's arrival at the prosecutors' office in southern Seoul, grumbled that he had pulled off his "last successful operation" by turning up unfilmed at the central office.

He is accused of masterminding a smear campaign directed against then opposition presidential hopeful Kim Dae-Jung before the Dec. 18 election and tampering with ANSP documents to blackmail the current government.

Mr. Kwon allegedly told his subordinates to arrange a press conference by a U.S.-based Korean businessman, Yoon Hong-Jun, in Beijing a week before the polls in a bid to link Kim Dae-Jung to Stalinist North Korea.

He allegedly paid Mr. Yoon \$200,000.

At the press conference the businessman charged that he had been present when a pro-Pyongyang Korean resident in China met with Kim Dae-Jung's son, Kim Hong-Il, in 1996 and conveyed a promise from North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il that he would provide electoral funds to Kim Dae-Jung.

"Ex-Director Kwon will be prosecuted on charges of masterminding the press conference and ordering the agency to finance it," a senior prosecutor was quoted as saying by Dong-A daily.

Mr. Kwon is also accused of ordering his subordinates to alter agency documents so that both the then ruling camp and Kim Dae-Jung's side, appeared to have been in contact with North Koreans before the presidential election.

Mr. Kwon allegedly used these documents as a means to blackmail the Kim Dae-Jung government to save himself and his subordinates from being punished for staging smear campaigns against Mr. Kim.

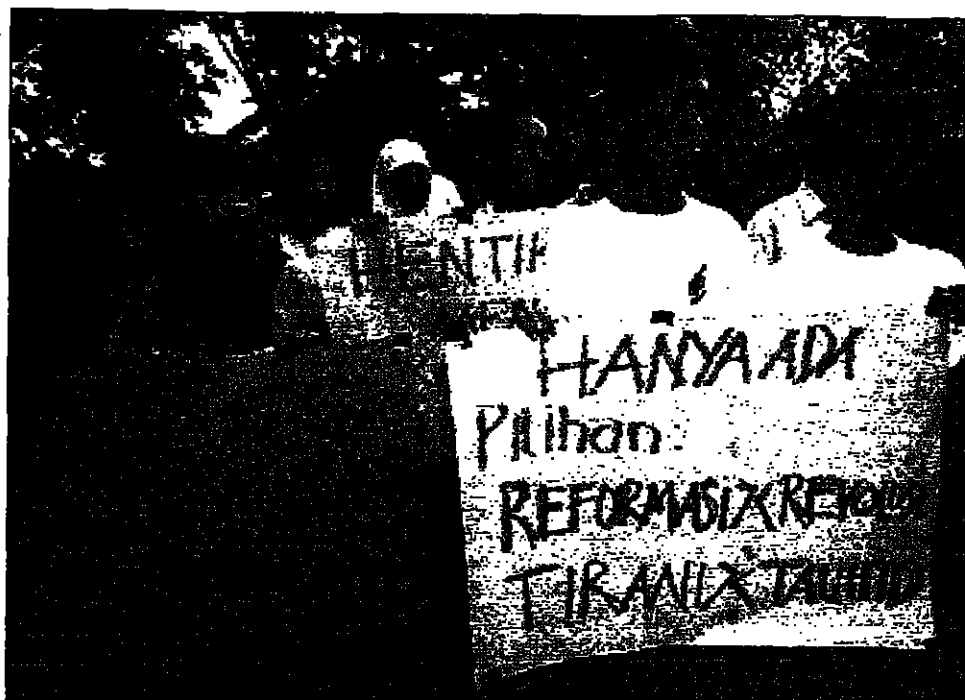
According to the documents, the then ruling Grand National Party (GNP) struck a back-room deal with Pyongyang, under which the North portrayed Kim Dae-Jung as its secret supporter.

An agent who was deeply involved in the smear campaign told journalists that most of the documents were authentic except for the part incriminating the new government.

Five agency officials have already been arrested on charges of involvement in the smear campaign.

Prosecution officials said the ongoing probe would be limited to the press conference in Beijing and would not reach politicians, even though the then ruling GNP allegedly paid Pyongyang for a joint smear campaign against Mr. Kim.

Warning of the possibility of playing into the hands of North Korea, Kim Dae-Jung Thursday called for an early wrapping up of the probe, which seriously compromised some of the country's intelligence activities.



Members of the Islamic Association of Students hold anti-government banners during a protest in downtown Jakarta. Some 100 students called on President Suharto to reform government policy and called on other student groups to join forces. Posters read (left to right): 'How long do the people have to suffer, is 32 years not enough?' and 'We must have reform or revolt' (Reuters photo)

Briton's war crimes testimony a show — paper

ZAGREB (AFP) — A pro-government Croatian newspaper said Friday that testimony given by British politician Paddy Ashdown to the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal was like "a show" and timed to coincide with British pressure on Zagreb.

Mr. Ashdown, the leader of Britain's centrist Liberal Democrat party, told the tribunal in The Hague Thursday that Croatian President Franjo Tudjman once told him there was no place for Bosnia in the former Yugoslavia.

The former commando said that at a banquet in London in May 1995, he had asked Mr. Tudjman to describe how he saw borders in the former Yugoslavia in 10 years' time.

Mr. Ashdown said that Mr. Tudjman drew a broad S-shaped border running southward from Slavonia, a northeastern region of Croatia, through the middle of Bosnia. Of the divided territory, the eastern part was for Serbia and the west would go to Croatia, Mr. Tudjman said.

The Croatian daily Vecernji List said that given the unusually large numbers of journalists present "it was more like a show than testimony at which serious proof was presented."

"After coming out of the court, he gave many interviews which leads to the conclusion that the show was very well prepared and performed at the right moment, parallel with

British accusations against Croatia," the paper wrote. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on a visit to Bosnia this month slammed a speech made by Mr. Tudjman in which he described the border with Bosnia as "unfavourable" to Croatia.

Mr. Cook warned that "there is no map of Europe ... with any place for a greater Croatia or a greater Serbia."

The paper ended by asking ironically if it was the job of an ex-commando who entered diplomacy "to report what people talk about at dinners where rivers of wine are flowing."

Foreign ministry officials were unavailable for comment on Mr. Ashdown's testimony Friday morning.

Third plane crash for Taiwan in four days

TAIPEI (AFP) — A new Taiwanese air force F-16 jet with two pilots aboard crashed into the Taiwan Strait off Penghu Island, an air force spokesman said Friday.

"Helicopters and rescue boats are searching the crash site," the spokesman said, adding that the two pilots — identified as air force Major Wen Chin-Sung, 34, and Captain Chang Chia-Cheng, 28 — are listed as missing.

The F-16 from the southern air base of Chiayi crashed while on a routine mission off Penghu, the spokesman said.

It marked the first major incident involving the advanced fighter since the first F-16 squadron was commissioned last October.

"We have grounded all the F-16s at the base for comprehensive safety

check," Wu Chien-Hsing, an air force officer, told the press.

He said the cause of the mystery incident remained to be investigated. "Either human errors, mechanical failure or bad weather could be to blame," Mr. Wu said.

The crash was the third involving Taiwan planes in four days, two of them involving military aviation.

Two pilots were killed after an army twin-seat TH-55 trainer plane crashed in southern Taiwan Tuesday and 13 people were killed when a Formosa Airlines plane crashed in the sea off the Taiwanese island of Hsinchu.

Taiwan unveiled the first five of 150 F-16 fighters from the United States in May last year, marking a milestone in the island's bid to boost its air defence

capability.

The air force has taken delivery of more than 40 F-16s it ordered from the U.S., with the first squadron already in force.

Despite strong protests from Beijing, which regards Taiwan as a break-away province, Washington authorised the sale of the 150 advanced fighters to Taiwan in a \$5.8 billion package in 1992.

As part of the military build-up, the air force also ordered 60 Mirage 2000-5s from France and 130 indigenous defensive fighters from the island's Aero Industry Development Corporation.

Beijing has more than once threatened to invade Taiwan should the island declare formal independence, prompting the nationalist island to seek more advanced weaponry.

Children die fleeing routed Sierra Leone troops on killing spree

FREETOWN (AFP) — Some 46 malnourished children have died in east Sierra Leone, where fleeing remnants of an ousted junta meanwhile embarked on a killing spree, an eyewitness said Friday, speaking of "hell on earth."

A nurse who had travelled from the area told AFP in the capital Freetown that the children had died in the jungle between Njagbwema and Kailahun, some 250 kilometres to the east, some after eating poisonous leaves.

The nurse, who was among many haggard civilians arriving in Freetown after enduring what she said was "hell on earth", added that forces of the regime routed from Freetown last month had begun a killing spree in the diamond-rich Kono District.

More than 200 people remain trapped in the forest, where many have died from malaria, malnutrition and cholera, after fleeing when junta supporters went on the

rampage last weekend in the town of Koidu, killing at least 30 people and looting and burning down houses.

Rebels of the Revolutionary United Front, which launched a civil war in Sierra Leone in 1991 and rallied to the junta after it seized power last May, were among the marauders in Koidu, several witnesses said.

A Nigerian-led intervention force known as ECOMOG, which chased the junta from Freetown in mid-February, has also deployed across much of the West African country and plans eventually to defeat or arrest all pro-junta forces.

"Very soon there will be no junta soldiers or rebels in the bush," ECOMOG commander Colonel Maxwell Khobe said in a radio interview Friday.

Junta supporters are also concentrated in the eastern town of Kailahun, long an RUF stronghold, as well as in the Kono district.

Col. Khobe instructed Sierra Leonean soldiers who had registered with ECOMOG to report to their barracks Monday and remain there until the United Nations draws up disarmament plans.

"Those soldiers who have committed crimes will be dealt with. The plan is for all soldiers to report back to their barracks wherever they were before the war," Col. Khobe said.

The Nigerian colonel explained that ECOMOG's power of arrest derived from a state of emergency announced this week by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who returned to Freetown last week after living in exile in Guinea since the coup.

On the rumoured presence of junta informants in the capital, Col. Khobe said: "All those that are keeping the junta remnants informed in the bush are being monitored and at the appropriate time we shall arrest them."

Indonesian students step up anti-government demos

JAKARTA (AFP) — Dozens were injured as Indonesian students stepped up their challenge on tight security imposed on anti-government demonstrations, sources reported Friday.

The latest clashes were in Bandar Lampung, in the south Sumatran province of Lampung, where 2,000 students clashed with security forces at the state Lampung University.

As Indonesia's economic crisis has worsened, it was the latest in a series of growing protests in universities across the country in the past four weeks to demand economic and political reforms.

Twenty-seven students and three police were injured in clashes at Lampung University. Other 13 students and three police were injured during a confrontation on the holiday island of Bali, sources and reports said.

Security remained tight at Lampung Friday with soldiers and police on

standby near the campus gate, a university security employee said.

Students clashed with hundreds of police blocking their way out of the university Thursday. Seven students remained on hunger strike to support their demand for reforms, the security office employee said.

Students from at least six universities, academies and high schools, gathered Thursday morning to demand reforms. They also demanded the release of a student detained by police the previous day.

"They first began yelling anti-Suharto slogans but later it degenerated into provocative insults and stone throwing," said one resident.

At least three police were injured by stones while 27 students were injured, the resident said adding that two of the students were rushed to hospital.

The resident said some police ran after students into the campus and beat them.

At least 500 police were deployed, the official Antara news agency said, adding that students had tried to take the protest out of the campus.

About 60 protesters were taken by police for questioning but released again, national police spokesman Brigadier General Da'i Bachtiar told AFP.

Newspaper reports said four police were taken hostage, but Brig. Gen. Bachtiar also denied this.

Violent scuffles with the security forces also took place Thursday at the Udayana University in Denpasar, Bali, a resident said.

"One of the injured students had to be taken to the hospital for stitches," said one of the hundreds of students to take part in the protest rally.

The student said police were still on guard in front of the university but there were no new protests. The Kompas daily said three police were injured by stones thrown during

Thursday's clash.

Indonesian security forces have so far said peaceful student rallies would be allowed within university grounds.

There have been several days of peaceful student rallies in Bandar Lampung to demand reforms and lower prices of essential goods. There have been an increasing number of protests around the country.

Clashes between security personnel and students left at least 28 students injured in Surabaya, East Java, and in Solo, Central Java, Tuesday.

Demonstrations at Indonesian universities in recent weeks have seen up to 10,000 people take part to demand comprehensive reforms. Security officials have warned they will not tolerate street rallies but would allow demonstrations within universities.

Contact Group officials meet on Kosovo

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Senior officials of the six-nation "Contact Group" on the former Yugoslavia met here Friday to discuss how to help solve the inter-ethnic crisis in Serbia's Kosovo province.

Friday's meeting comes a day after the expiration of a Contact Group deadline for Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to open talks on the issue with Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leaders.

Mr. Milosevic Thursday named a special envoy for

the troubled region, Yugoslav Vice-Premier Vlado Kutlesic.

Mr. Kutlesic is meant to take part in a dialogue in Kosovo between representatives of the Serb government and those from ethnic Albanian political parties.

Mr. Kutlesic, a close ally of the Yugoslav strongman, was his advisor for legal and constitutional issues while Mr. Milosevic was president of Serbia, and one of the authors of constitutional changes which revoked

Kosovo's autonomy status in 1989.

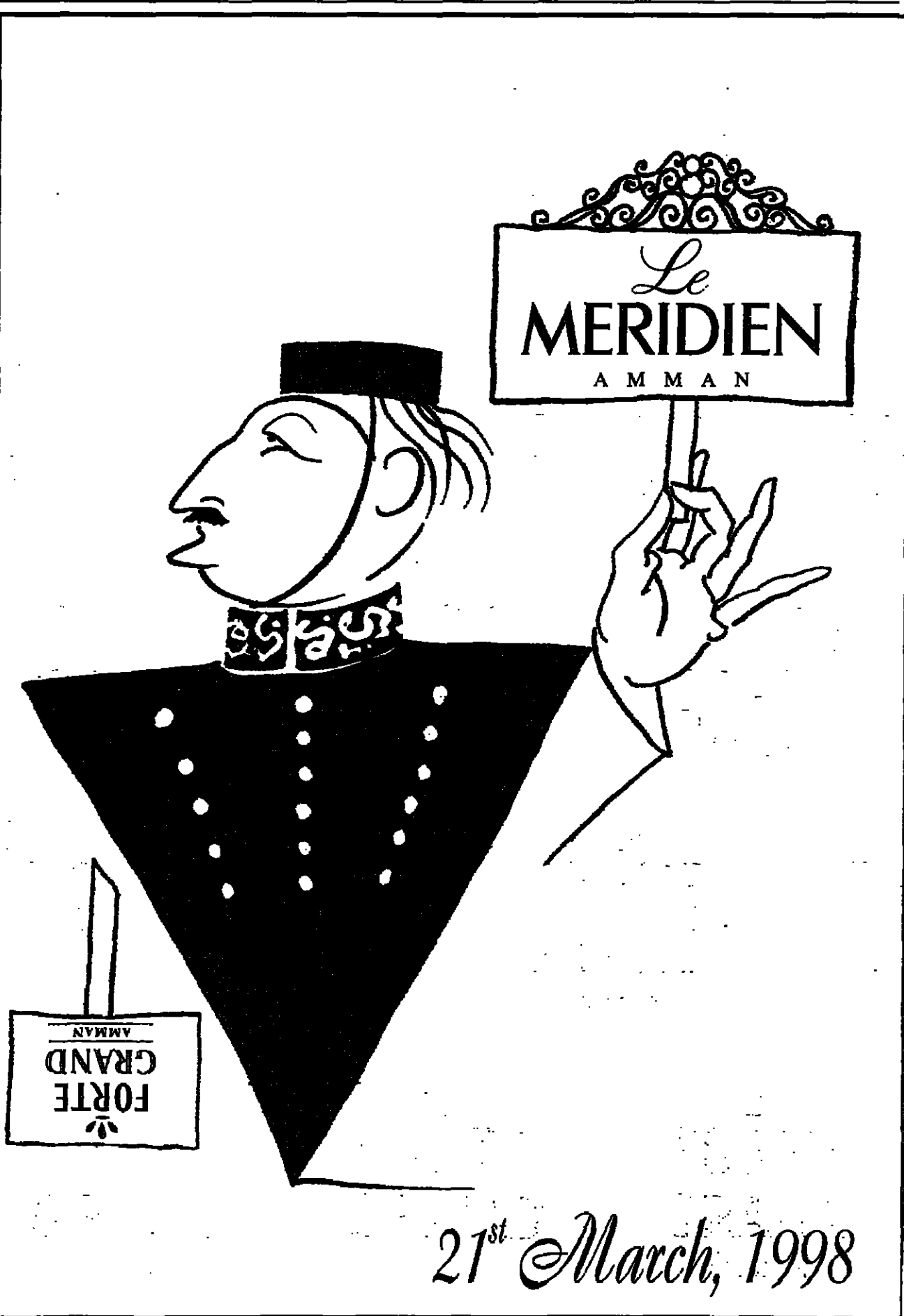
Some 200 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo gathered outside the building where the talks were taking place to protest against the crackdown by Serbian police in the province.

At Friday's Brussels meeting the United States were represented by Balkans special envoy Robert Gelbard. The other five members — Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia — sent senior political officials.

The meeting is to prepare the next full ministerial session of the Contact Group on the Kosovo crisis in Bonn Wednesday, diplomats said.

When it met in London on March 9, the six-power group gave Serbian authorities 10 days to withdraw their forces from Kosovo where at least 80 people have died in a Serbian crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists.

The Albanian community makes up 90 per cent of the region's population.



Jordan Times

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Building on solid foundations

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's talks with President Bill Clinton came at a critical juncture in the Middle Eastern peace process as well as in the unfolding Iraqi situation. The warm reception given the King by U.S. secretaries of state and defence as well as by the speakers of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on the eve of his talks with President Clinton reflects the high esteem with which the Monarch is held in the U.S. The White House meeting Thursday has assumed a greater sense of urgency and importance due to persistent reports that the Clinton administration is about to unveil its own initiative to rejuvenate the peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Washington had given the two sides ample time to come to grips with the issues that divide them but they have failed to overcome them especially because of Israel's intransigence on the redeployment issue. The U.S. intervention to breathe new life into the peace process comes also amid reports that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is cool to any outside intervention or mediation even by Washington. Obviously the Israeli leader is more comfortable with the current state of affairs, dangerous as it is, and is content with marking time than moving forward in the peace process. Having successfully neutralised the initiative of the European Union (EU) as carried forward by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook during his recent trip to six Middle Eastern capitals, Israel is ready and determined to deal a death blow to President Clinton's plan as well. Cook was not only given the cold shoulder by Netanyahu, he was even rudely treated during his recent visit to Israel.

While any new U.S. formula has yet to be made public, there is no doubt that it would differ very little from the EU ideas. London has called for a credible Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories and a freeze on all unilateral measures that aim to preempt the final status talks. American ideas could not be so different from those of Britain. But if Israel thinks it has successfully sidelined the role of Europe it will soon discover that it can ill-afford to do the same with Washington's own proposals on moving the process forward. Netanyahu could face panic, and this may explain his decision to rush his Minister of Trade Natan Sharansky to Washington to seek information and initiate a damage control operation. Against this backdrop, King Hussein's talks with President Clinton would have assumed even a greater sense of importance as they came at a time when the U.S. thoughts on the Middle East are in the process of crystallising.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi reflected on the outcome of the Islamic foreign ministers meeting in Doha saying that it achieved some positive and some negative results. The positive results are represented in the fact that many of the countries which kept away from the Doha economic summit last year attended the meeting this time and that all of the Islamic countries were present giving a sign that the spirit of solidarity has returned to the Organisation of Islamic Conference, said the writer. But the most important positive result he said, lies in a decision by Qatar to close down the Israeli trade office in Doha and the unanimous call for boycotting the Jewish state in the light of its anti-peace moves. But the writer pointed out that the meeting has acted in a negative sense by declining to express solidarity with Iraq, preferring to urge Baghdad to implement all U.N. resolutions—something which Baghdad has already done—and freeing of all Kuwait prisoners. Since Baghdad has repeatedly announced it has no more prisoners of war, said the writer, this call demonstrates that not only the U.S. maintains hostility towards Iraq but that Muslim nations too are harbouring enmity towards the Iraqi people in that they do not want to see the sanctions lifted.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab expressed pessimism over the present tour of the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in the Middle East saying that the U.N. has lost its credibility and cannot restore its role as a peace broker. The writer said that since it allowed the U.S. to take charge of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the U.N. has proved impotent in guaranteeing Israel's compliance with the Security Council resolutions or withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and even the implementation of the resolutions concerning the oppressed Palestinian people. Following the collapse of the socialist bloc, the U.S. has maintained its sole super power role in the region preventing European nations, Russia and other powers from exercising any real role to end the conflict in this region, said the writer. As long as the U.S. does not want to see the U.N. playing a meaningful role in achieving peace in this region added the writer, Mr. Annan, who had achieved successful mediation in the question of the Iraqi weapons inspection in Iraq, will find himself unable to achieve any fruitful result through a mere brief tour of this volatile region.

Jordanian Perspective

Why the charade of new initiatives?

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THOUGH MANY Jordanians are traditionally suspicious of any British official's stands against Israel, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's visit came to confirm their deeply inherent doubts.

The writing was on the wall that the new European Union (EU) initiative was a non-starter since the day the foreign secretary said he would visit the Abu Ghneim site of a planned Jewish settlement. The visit was the perfect pretext Israel was seeking and waiting for to stonewall the EU initiative while paying lip service about how much the Israelis appreciated the European effort to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

Sure enough, the thrust of the EU initiative carried to the region was totally deflected in the din of the Israeli outcry and indignation over why the British foreign secretary would visit the controversial site accompanied by a Palestinian official. The entire focus of the Cook mission was lost and instead it gave Israel the ideal opportunity to accuse the EU of bias and disregard whatever the Europeans had to say in the way of giving new impetus to the peace process.

What did the peace process or the Palestinians gain from the Cook visit? The point is debatable, but, in the final analysis, the loss they suffered in terms of effective European diplomacy was simply not worth the political symbolism of Cook visiting Jabal Abu Ghneim and reiterating the EU's rejection of

Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied territories.

It was not the first time the EU had made public its opposition to Israel's colonisation of Palestinian territories. As such, the Europeans introduced nothing new with the Cook visit.

Did the actual visit itself send any message to Israel? Definitely not. That much was clearly evident from the way Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu snubbed Cook by cancelling a dinner with the foreign secretary and described his visit to Jabal Abu Ghneim as an affront to Israel's claim of sovereignty over all of Jerusalem. Worse still is the way some European media organisations described Cook's mission as aimed at putting pressure on Israel. It was as if the scenario of the launching, or the lack thereof, of the EU initiative was written beforehand and Cook only went through the motions of enacting it.

That gives rise to suggestions that the EU foreign ministers are not really serious when they make lofty statements of their concern over the stalled peace process and how earnestly they want to see a just, comprehensive and durable peace prevail in the region. Of course, we have no doubt that the EU wants such a peace in the Middle East, but it is also abundantly clear that the Europeans want that peace at the expense of Palestinian rights. They are either incapable of forcing Israel to see reason or simply don't want to antagonise the Jewish state.

Why then the charade of new initiatives and reaffirmation of pledges to seek to a higher profile role in the peace process? If they mean what they say, then they should also be ready to live up to the requirements of the situation.

We in this region know it for a fact that there are only two ways of pressuring Israel by hitting it where it hurts most—militarily or economically. Obviously no EU country is ready, or expected to be ready, to apply military pressure on Israel. That leaves economic pressure. But our experience has shown clearly that despite the facade of a united EU approach, individual interests of EU member countries have made it impossible for us to even envisage EU economic sanctions against the Jewish state. Indeed we can see a handful of European countries which are sincere in their call for a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, but their voice is drowned out by a few others which seem determined to serve Israel's interests, both directly and indirectly. If indeed Europe is intent on seeing genuine peace in the Middle East, then the way to go about it is to send a loud and clear message to Israel that the Jewish state stands to lose lucrative favoured status in trade and economic cooperation and also be ready to make good on that threat. As long as that approach is missing, there could be a dozen missions like that of Cook's and we would still be there where we are today in our desire for peace in the Middle East.

'Israelis, don't miss this chance for peace'

By Bassam Abu Sharif

PALESTINIANS HAVE no illusions about establishing their own state and wish the Israelis would be as realistic as they are. Palestinians who have renounced the use of violence and are fighting it have done so to establish peace for themselves and for all the peoples of the Middle East, including the Israeli people.

Since the declaration of the Israeli state, the Palestinian people suffered enormously because of injustice inflicted upon them. Generation after generation of Palestinians grew up in refugee camps and their diaspora. They suffered both the historic injustice done to them and the injustice imposed on them by states in which they had to live. In spite of all international and regional promises, their suffering continued decade after decade.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian people have not forgotten their homeland, their roots, their history, their heritage and their rights.

The Palestinians are offering Israel peace and security. They do not wish to complicate issues. All they want is to get their rights back and self-determination, as any other people seeking independence.

The young generation of Israel today probably does not remember or even knows that the Israeli state was created on the basis of a U.N. General Assembly resolution which called for partitioning Palestine on Nov. 29, 1947—resolution 181. The young may not know that resolution 181 contained two articles:

To establish a state for the Jews on part of Palestine;

To establish a Palestinian state on the other part.

Thus, Israel's certificate of birth issued by the U.N. General Assembly is also a birth certificate for a Palestinian state.

After decades of bloodshed, the Palestinians came forward with a peace initiative under the U.S. umbrella which gave real meaning to the principle of "land for peace." The Palestinians

took a courageous decision to recognise Israel, to recognise secure borders for Israel and to renounce terrorism. At the same time, they sought to establish a Palestinian state on the land Israel occupied in 1967—a state that will live in peace and cooperation with the state of Israel.

The Israelis want a pure Jewish state and do not want Palestinians living among them. Palestinians are equally eager to live by themselves in freedom and security in their own independent state. So why does the Israeli government reject our separation from them and the establishment of our own state?

If Israelis put their illusions aside, they will find that establishment of an independent Palestinian state is in their interest and the only path to a new Middle East in which Israel could be welcomed as a full member of the Middle Eastern community. This is how Israelis can secure a greatly improved relationship with their neighbours in the region where they reside.

Why do the Israeli generations limit their vision to what is directly in front of them? Why do the leaders of Israel lose so many historical opportunities to achieve peace? The proper vision is one that can grasp the strategic value of resolving outstanding conflicts which would benefit the political, economic and social life of all the people who live in the area. The depth of such positive development is linked to the political solution, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state that can bridge the gap between Israel and the rest of the Middle East.

It is true that the West Bank and Gaza Strip supplied the Israelis over the past three decades with a source of great profit. The Israelis pillaged the resources of those occupied areas, used the cheap labour force of Palestine and dumped inferior products in their markets. They profited in countless billions of dollars.

What the Palestinians offer the Israelis is much more profitable. If Palestinians and

Israelis realise that their joint population does not equal that of one big city—not New York, London or Paris, but cities in the region like Cairo, Tehran and Algiers—they may understand that their cooperation through peace is necessary for their future welfare. Let us think together of our size compared to the size of others and of our abilities compared to the abilities of others.

The Palestinians say this to the Israelis: Do you fear the establishment of a Palestinian state? The Palestinians understand Israel's worry about security and they are ready to cooperate fully to do everything humanly possible to reduce any danger. But the truth is that security is a result of political settlement and serious cooperation with mutual respect and equality.

The Palestinians also say: The old security theories failed a long time ago and the sources of Israel's security worries are not Jordan or Egypt or the Palestinians. The current security worries come, according to Israeli leaders, from Iran or Iraq. In other words, Israel's security concern springs from locations a thousand or more miles away and not in distances measured in hundreds of metres, or the Jordan River or the Jericho mountains.

My prescription for Israeli security and a far better and more secure life as a nation of the Middle East is to establish an independent Palestinian state that would separate Israelis and Palestinians—create a "secure" border between them so that both can live independently and at the same time open up opportunities to cooperate as neighbours.

The Palestinians are rightly keen and ambitious to realise their right of self-determination by establishing their own independent state on the Palestinian land which Israel occupied in 1967. To realise their goal, they hold these views:

The Palestinians do not want to establish an army or military forces. Police and security forces, however, are necessary to keep law and order and protect human rights.

In Palestine, the national borders would be under Palestinian control. The Palestinians are ready to accept, for as long as the Israelis wish, joint control of their borders with U.S., multinational or U.N. forces, but they reject the presence of Israeli forces that would breach the sovereignty of Palestinians on their land.

Palestinians renounce terrorism and recognise the right of Israel to live behind secure and recognised borders.

The Israelis insist on installing early warning systems in several areas of the West Bank. The Palestinians do not mind at all having such early warning systems installed on their soil in order to make the Israelis feel secure. Such systems, however, could only be manned by U.S., multinational or U.N. forces.

For the Israelis, the water problem is serious; so it is for the Palestinians. Palestinian water reservoirs could be mutually and beneficially be used through long-term agreements that could be negotiated.

The Israelis who benefit from the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip can be assured that the Palestinian state would be ready to sign long-term economic agreements with their businesses to ensure mutual benefit on the basis of equal treatment.

Palestinians will be fully in accord with the establishment of joint Palestinian-Israeli commissions to deal with every issue of importance for both sides. At the top of the list of issues can be security and fighting terrorism on both sides.

The real question is this: Are the Israelis ready to establish peace between the state of Israel and the state of Palestine?

This is a clear-cut invitation to the Israelis to step forward and establish peace that will benefit Israel, Palestine and the Middle East. We can work together to establish this peace. Israel should not miss this opportunity.

The writer is special adviser to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Analyses of Cook's tour, Sharon's threats draw warnings

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

THE FOCUS of opinion writers last week was on the British foreign secretary's tour of the region in an effort, via the European Union, to revive the peace process. Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon's threats against Jordan, and pan-Arab affairs.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said that since the U.S. is in no position to exert pressure on Israel to force it to comply with the requirements of peace, it has sought help from its European allies. The British foreign secretary's tour of this region, said the writer, was the result of a tacit agreement between the U.S. and Europe, evidenced by Robin Cook's remarks that Europe's role complements that of the U.S. and is not a substitute to it. For its part, Israel rejects any role by Europe and only accepts the views of its U.S. ally, thus Israel's cool reception of Mr. Cook. Qallab said adding that he hoped Europe will rise to the occasion and exert real pressure on the Jewish state for the purpose of attaining the aspired peaceful settlement.

Tayseer Al Zibri of Al Ra'i said the European initiative to give impetus to the peace process calls for a freezing of the Jewish settlement programmes and withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Palestinian lands something which Israel totally rejects. Israel claims it cannot accept these proposals, which are in harmony with the Oslo accord, because of security considerations, according to the writer. The Israelis also refuse to withdraw their forces from southern Lebanon, except with assurances from Beirut that its forces will protect Israel's northern borders, he added. The writer said Israel's rejection displeases the Europeans and they are certain to accept defeat and sooner or later abandon any attempt to address the Arab-Israeli conflict and so please the Israeli premier and world Zionism.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Nicola Nasser referred to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's remarks that the peace process is facing its demise stressing that only the end of the Israeli settlement programmes can bring the peace process back to life. Unless the Israeli tanks retreat from their

present position and unless Netanyahu gives in to pressure from the Europeans and the Palestinians, nothing can prevent the death of the peace process, according to the writer. Expressing pessimism over Mr. Cook's Middle East tour, the writer said, unless Europe reinforces its political pressure on Israel with economic pressure, Cook's tour will be a total failure. He said, in that event, the Palestinians and the Arabs at large who are dissatisfied with Europe and the U.S. are certain to become increasingly frustrated and the Arab region is bound to witness more tension.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan said that at the Islamic foreign ministers conference in Doha, Arab and Muslim countries expressed their conviction that the peace process is facing total deadlock due to the present position and unless Netanyahu gives in to pressure from the Europeans and the Palestinians, nothing can prevent the death of the peace process, according to the writer. Expressing pessimism over Mr. Cook's Middle East tour, the writer said, unless Europe reinforces its political pressure on Israel with economic pressure, Cook's tour will be a total failure. He said, in that event, the Palestinians and the Arabs at large who are dissatisfied with Europe and the U.S. are certain to become increasingly frustrated and the Arab region is bound to witness more tension.

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THE WEEK IN PRINT

Jewish state's intransigent position. These countries have become convinced that in view of the situation halting normalisation with Israel has become inevitable. Egypt and Jordan which have concluded peace treaties with Israel should not exclude themselves from a unanimous decision by the Islamic nations to halt normalisation with the Jewish state, said the writer. What is required from Amman and Cairo is a change of their political stand towards Israel simply because the two countries believe that peace should not be partial but comprehensive involving all parties particularly the Palestinians. Sultan Al Hattab of Al Ra'i addressed recent statements by Israeli Minister Ariel Sharon who had issued threats to assassinate Khaled Mifal. After the first attempt on Mifal's life Jordan accepted Israel's apology and pledges that there would be no recurrence of such activities by its secret service against Jordan and Jordanian citizens, but, said the writer, Sharon has chosen to prove that Israel is lying and that the Jewish state is bent on committing acts of terrorism regardless of the promises and the pledges given to Jordan. In view of the threats, Mifal has all the right to make plans to defend himself and to take steps to deter the enemy's open threats on his life, stressed the writer. At the same time he

added Jordan has the right to take whatever political steps it deems necessary to put an end to this serious situation.

Hilmi Asmar, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, demanded that Jordan expel the Israeli ambassador to Jordan and recall its ambassador in Tel Aviv in response to Sharon's threats against the Kingdom's security. The Jews have always been hypocrites and cannot be trusted, and Sharon has proved that they are really so, he said. The writer said that while the Israeli government is proceeding with atrocities against the Palestinian people Sharon issues open threats against Jordan. Even during a Jordanian official delegation's visit to Tel Aviv the Israelis chose to kill three Palestinian workers in total defiance of the Jordanian and Palestinian people's feelings. The writer said Jordan should no longer remain silent about such inhumanities and should take measures to guarantee its security and that of its citizens.

Husseini Abu Rumman, a writer for Al Ra'i, lauded the Arab League for its decision to discuss the sanctions imposed on Libya in its March 24 meetings in Cairo. The writer said the decision marks a new beginning and a new trend in the Arab World to defy unjust sanctions against Arab people taken by the U.N. under the orders of London and Washington. Should the Arab states decide to end the sanctions on Libya the Arab League would achieve a major success in its drive to protect Arab nations' interests. The Arab League should base its decision on a recent verdict by the International Court of Justice which ruled that the sanctions are illegitimate and should be suspended. He said the verdict has opened the way for the Arab League to take decisive action on this issue.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Rihana Farra criticised the government's plans for taking control over the savings funds of the private sector companies. She said that while the state continuously encourages the people to save and to avert excessive spending, it is now punishing those who have been saving money. The government's plan entails imposing income tax on the people's savings though these people, all employees in the private sector, have been paying their income tax dues to the state's treasury, noted the writer.

LETTERS

Motivated by the 'same' values

To the editor:

IN HIS "Jordanian Perspective" (Jordan Times, March 14, 1998), Dr. Musa Keilani refers to the tragic incident in which three Palestinians were killed in the West Bank. He concludes that "a majority of Israelis apply a Nazi-like approach towards the Arabs" and that "Israelis are dealing with the Palestinians no differently than the way Hitler's soldiers dealt with Non-Aryans."

The incident that occurred the night of March 10 in which Adnan Abu Zaid, Ghaleb Rajab, and Mohammad Shada died was indeed a tragic one. The soldiers at the checkpoint, where the three Palestinians were shot, claim they fired only after the van in which the Palestinians were riding speeded up and hit the commanding officer of the checkpoint. Their version is being verified, and results are expected in the coming days.

Nazism was an abhorrent beastly attempt by a government of one nation to totally annihilate another people. As a result, six million Jews, children, women and men, met their death in gas chambers, standing naked before firing squads and starving in labour camps. Any attempt to describe events, tragic as they are, between Israelis and Palestinians, in terms of the Nazi attempt to erase the Jewish people from the face of earth, is untrue, unjust and unfair.

"The new breed of Israelis," as Dr. Keilani calls them, wants peace and accommodation no less than "The new breed of Palestinians." "The new breed of Israelis" is motivated by the same values as "The new breed of Palestinians," that is to say, security, prosperity, and dignity. They wish for the day when there will be no more barriers between them and the Palestinians. Not only physical barriers but also psychological ones.

Roey Gilad
 Spokesman
 Israeli Embassy
 Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

A call to rebuild Arab World by 'intercommunication'

Book Review

Road to Future: Ideas — Forces for the visible Arab future, by Fahmi Jad'an Arab Foundation for Research and Publishing, Beirut, 1996.

Fahmi Jad'an deserves to be called "the philosopher of Arab intercommunication" in contemporary world.

In his influential book *Road to Future*, Jad'an calls for establishing the principle of intercommunication between the Arab countries as a major means of solving their problems of backwardness. He demands a rebuilding of an Arab World based on genuine intercommunication which will restore the lost confidence and stir beneficial action and creative intercommunication. The author seeks to achieve three goals: enlightenment, a call for action, and emphasis on the principle of intercommunication.

Jad'an raises several questions about the flaws in Arab life and culture. He reveals the essence of such flaws and specifies a number of causes.

Of his book, Jad'an says, "This is a formative and interpretive work which embodies my contemplation, understanding, conception, and estimation of the issues which I believe to be essential, pivotal, and vital to our current existence at the end of this century and the turn of the next century which presently announces itself loudly" (p.6).

He raises questions such as: who are we? Where are the strength factors of our nation? How can we stop our collapse? He thinks that the secret of

the flaws in the Arab Nation lies in the weakness of our communication capabilities. Such thinking establishes an intellectual school in communication that searches for a communicative approach to understanding our reality.

Jad'an calls on Arabs to move at least intellectually because "global transformations have thrown us in the furnace of an infernal cultural machine we cannot just afford to look at the intricacies of its formation, methods and effects of its operations overwhelmed with amazement and panic" (p.7).

He urges us to correct our view of what is happening, and to create an efficient mechanism that will enable us to respond appropriately to life's challenges and to continue our existence and that of future generations within safe conditions.

This work, which carries an optimistic title, comes as a response to the call of life. It diagnoses the root causes of the current Arab crisis and predicts the future possibilities that require reformulating new ideas that call for a "different" Arab being and reshaping of his reality.

In the chapter entitled "Intercommunication," Jad'an points to the flaw that afflicts Arab human relations at all levels from the family level to the level of political relation between leaders. Such a flaw, which has led to a breakdown in communication, has seriously weakened relations at several levels: at the social level as seen in the distortion of personal relations in the Arab societies, at the regional level between various Arab countries, at

the superstructure level (national ideology and its relation to religion) which led to the downfall of the Arab Nation, and at the international level (the relationship between the Arabs and the West).

He specifically points out the negative effects of the breakdown of intercommunication on the factors of Arab unity: common language, history, expectations, sentiments, destiny, religion, and culture as a contemporary unifying factor.

He elaborates that human relations are basically mutual emotional and sentimental relationships; not unidirectional pragmatic relations. Consequently, human relations (communication between individuals, civilisations and cultures) will not be human (mutual emotional and sentimental relations) unless they are established on coexistence and mutual empathy, which means that sentimental feeling is the basis for human relations between individuals.

Jad'an quotes the philosopher Eric Fromm who thinks that there is no life based on isolation and lack of communication since man is a social and communicative being controlled by his relations with others for many reasons among which is the need to escape from isolation — one of man's basic needs.

According to Jad'an, Arab intercommunication sentiments have suffered from a decisive blow — borders have increased, more checkpoints are erected, and travel between various Arab countries have become more complicated. A Palestinian, for example, has become a stranger

who is left stranded between borders and crossing points and unwelcome by any country. And even if he is let in by any country, he will remain under constant watch. Instead of being a unifying factor, Palestine has become an evil cause, and the Palestinian a necessary evil.

Furthermore, Arab intercommunication sentiments have suffered a deep injury as a result of the last Gulf war. Consequently, added to the Arabs' earlier divisions are divisions into conflicting parties.

He says, "Intercommunication relations between regions of the Arab World toward the end of this century have reached their lowest point of intensity, depth, interconnection, and capabilities." He warns of the decline in the intensity of common feelings, of the emergence of a stereotypical image of the "other" Arab in some Arab countries, of an instigation campaign, and of culture which is hostile to positive Arab interrelations.

Jad'an demands the reforming of relations between individuals in the family and the street, and a restoration of intimate feelings of love which join people together. He adds that we can understand ourselves through communication and dialogue between ourselves and others because the other, "the Arab brother" in the house, the street, the institution, and the state is our mirror. Only by him and with him our affairs and our nation's affairs will improve tremendously.

Dr. Tayseer Mashareqa
Philadelphia University

Officers in exile plot Saddam's fall

By Patrick Cockburn

SENIOR IRAQI army officers who have fled Iraq in recent years plan to set up their own military organisation to overthrow President Saddam Hussein. The move comes because they are frustrated by the helplessness and divisions within the Iraqi political opposition.

"Army officers outside Iraq know those inside and still in the army," says General Wafiq Al Samarra'i, the former head of Iraqi military intelligence, who escaped from Baghdad in 1994.

"A military organisation should be set up in northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan where there are no Iraqi troops) or in a neighbouring Arab country."

The move is relevant because of greatly increased support for the Iraqi opposition from the Republican majority in the U.S. Congress, who see the defusing of the crisis over the inspection of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction as a defeat for America. They have added \$38 million (\$24 million) for opponents of President Saddam to the U.S. State Department authorisation bill.

General Samarra'i helped organise a small opposition army under the aegis of the Iraqi National Congress, an opposition umbrella group, which in 1995 tried to overthrow President Saddam through armed attacks aimed at fomenting mutinies and defections within the Iraqi army. He told *The Independent*: "The political opposition is helpless because they are divided."

Ironically, American support for Iraqi opposition groups is increasing just as their ability to overthrow the Iraqi government is on the decline. Although the U.S. Congress is likely to allocate funds for their support, they no longer have any true safe havens in Kurdistan or in the marshes of Southern Iraq.

The head of the Iraqi Mukhabarat security police was received by Kurdish leaders in Erbil and Sulaymaniyeh, their main cities, in January.

General Samarra'i admits that the chances of a successful coup d'état were diminished by the agreement brokered by Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, with President Saddam. He



General Wafiq Al Samarra'i

believes that some Iraqi generals would have moved against the regime if U.S. and British air strikes had occurred in February.

He says the Iraqi leader will move quickly to improve his relations with Arab governments in Egypt, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. He does not think that President Saddam will give up his weapons of mass destruction, not least because they played a key role in the defeat of Iran by Iraq in the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war.

General Samarra'i, who then headed Iraqi military intelligence against Iran, points a chilling picture of President Saddam's use of chemical weapons, culminating in a plan to put chemical warheads on missiles fired at Tehran, the Iranian capital, in 1988. He says the Iraqi leader was worried that poison gas, being heavier than air, would keep low and Iraqis would be able to survive by sealing doors and windows and getting into high buildings.

The plan devised by Iraqi military staff officers was first to send in Iraqi fighter-bombers to strike at Tehran. General Samarra'i says: "They planned to bombard the city with bombs which would break all the glass in the windows. This would allow the gas to spread."

— The Independent

Kingdom celebrates Prince Hassan's 51st birthday

(Continued from page 1)

1973-1975 and 1976-1980 National Development Plan Committees. In 1972, he founded the Royal Scientific Society; in 1978 the Bilad Al Sham Conference; in 1980 the Al Bayt Foundation; in 1981 the Arab Thought Forum; in 1982 the Forum Humanum (renamed, in 1988, the Arab Youth Forum); and in 1987 the Jordanian Higher Council for Science and Technology. He has also established and directed, in Jordan, the Islamic Scientific Academy, the Biannual Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan, the Hashemite Aid and Relief Agency, the Centre for Educa-

tional Development, the Centre on Refugees in Yarmouk University and, most recently, the now Al Bayt University in Mafraq.

On the international stage, His Royal Highness, in 1981, addressing the 36th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, proposed the establishment of a New International Humanitarian Order. This led, in 1983, to his founding and co-chairing of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICHI), whose final report he presented in 1987 to the secretary general at the 42nd General Assembly. In the field of religion, His Royal Highness initiated a series of contacts and meetings

that evolved into a systematic inter-faith dialogue. These consist primarily of three separate, albeit complimentary, ongoing consultations with the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Chambesy) the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (Vatican) and the Independent Commission on Christian-Muslim Relations (Deanery of Windsor).

His Royal Highness has paid official and working visits to numerous nations around the world and has received high decorations from over twenty countries. He holds the rank of Honorary General in the Jordanian Armed Forces and has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from universities in Jordan and abroad. Furthermore, in March 1987, His Majesty King Hussein conferred upon His Royal Highness the Al Hussein Ben Ali Medal, which is Jordan's highest decoration.

His Royal Highness has written numerous published articles and three books on political and regional issues in various languages. These are: "A study on Jerusalem (1979)", "Palestinian Self-Determination: A Study on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (1981), "Search for Peace" (1984) and "Christianity in the Arab World" (1994). His Royal Highness speaks fluent Arabic, English and French, has studied Hebrew, and understands German and Turkish.

Annan calls for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

tracks of the Middle East peace process, but excluded a direct role for the United Nations because "there is already a mediator," a reference to the United States.

"My hope is that the efforts that the United States government is making, through [Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright and [President Bill] Clinton himself... will succeed and help move the process forward," he said. "The U.S. government is working very hard with the parties to move the process forward, and I urge the parties to really work with the U.S. government, make the compromises necessary. We cannot stall forever or for too long," he said.

Mr. Annan arrived here earlier Friday for a two-day visit as part of a Middle East tour centred on the region's peace process and the situation in Iraq.

At the airport, relatives of scores of Lebanese detained in Israeli prisons were waiting with protest banners near the official convoy prepared for Mr. Annan, his wife and the delegation accompanying him, witnesses said. About 200 Lebanese are held, mostly without charges or trials, in prisons in the Israeli-occupied border zone of southern Lebanon and inside Israel. Mr. Annan held immediate talks with Mr. Bweiz at the foreign ministry and was also expected to inaugurate a U.N. headquarters, a newly constructed glass building in Beirut's downtown area, that will house U.N. agencies in Lebanon.

The U.N. chief will also hold separate talks with House Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, according to the programme published by the United Nations.

Nations.

On Saturday, Mr. Annan will visit the headquarters of the U.N. Interim Forces in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) at the town of Naqoura, near the Israeli border. Mr. Annan will later have a meeting with President Elias Hrawi at the presidential palace in Beirut's northeastern suburb of Baabda and hold a debate with about 50 students from the main private and public universities at the American University in Beirut. Before leaving Lebanon, Mr. Annan will also meet the follow-up committee fighting for the release of Lebanese detained in Israeli jails.

Mr. Annan is on the third stop of his regional tour. The U.N. chief has already visited Jordan and Egypt and is due in Syria March 21-23, in the Gaza Strip March 23, and in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv March 24-26.

Mr. Annan wrapped up a visit to Egypt on Thursday after separate talks with President Hosni Mubarak and Arab League chief Esmat Meguid.

In a joint press conference with Mr. Annan after their talks, Mr. Abdul Meguid called for a speedy lifting of the U.N. sanctions slapped on Libya over the Lockerbie bombing.

Mr. Abdul Meguid said a ruling last month by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague had given a new push towards the lifting of the sanctions, which are to be discussed by the U.N. Security Council on Friday. "Now after the recent decision of the ICJ, our opinion is that there is a new element that has been introduced in this conflict," he said. "We would like to see a solution acceptable for all parties."

a solution that would guarantee the rights of everybody and also the respect of dignity and sovereignty of Libya and to put an end to the sanctions," he added.

The Arab League secretary general's call came before Mr. Annan met with President Mubarak on issues including the Lockerbie affair and the Middle East peace process.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters following Mr. Annan's meeting with Mr. Mubarak that "the peace process cannot be separated from the United Nations, particularly in the absence of progress in direct negotiations."

He said that the United Nations "supports continuing the peace process on the basis of accords concluded between the parties and on the basis of Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Musa said that Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Annan also discussed the recent U.N.-Iraq accord defusing tension over weapons inspections, and the situations in Kosovo and Somalia.

The ICJ overrode the U.N. Security Council last month by ruling that it had the power to decide whether two Libyans — suspected of bombing Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 over Lockerbie in Scotland which left 270 people dead — should stand trial at home or abroad.

The United States and Britain have insisted that Tripoli extradite the men for trial in the United States or in Scotland, and Libya has been under U.N. sanctions since 1992 to force it to comply. Mr. Annan, who arrived in Egypt on Wednesday on the second stop of a regional tour focused on the Middle East peace process and the

situation in Iraq, told reporters late Thursday that he has "been in touch with both parties, the Libyans and the British" in the Lockerbie affair. He added: "It may be possible to find a way forward without reaching the [International] Court of Justice."

Earlier he said that he and the Arab League chief also "discussed the recent agreement in Iraq, the Middle East peace process, the sanctions against Libya, the Somali situation and the political crisis in Comoros Islands." "I stressed with Mr. Abdul Meguid that we need to work very, very closely. By working together we can be more effective," he added.

Asked if he was bringing new proposals to kickstart the deadlocked Middle East peace process, Mr. Annan merely said he was supporting the process.

"I don't think that it is appropriate for me to put new proposals on the table when there is a process in course with the U.S. mediating and the parties cooperating with us," he said.

"I am supporting the process. We should all work with the parties and the U.S. and support what they are doing," he added.

Asked later in a joint press conference with Mr. Musa if he thought he could defuse the Israeli-Palestinian crisis with the same success he defused the U.N.-Iraq arms inspection crisis, the U.N. chief said "I do not think the two are identical."

Mr. Musa said he believed last month's agreement between Mr. Annan and Iraq on inspections of Iraqi presidential sites had "restored the credibility of the United Nations."

The Saturday Crossword

ALL UPSET

By Arthur S. Verdesca, Morristown, New Jersey

ACROSS

1 Theatrical sketch

5 Brownish yellow

10 Follow

15 First man

19 Southabout

20 Hazy purple

21 Classic TV Western

22 1983 Nobel Prize winner

23 Upset

25 Upset

27 Incognito

28 Free-for-all

30 Most doolie

31 Team follow?

32 Calls to the phone

33 Outmoded sound system

34 Counterbalance

37 Cuppa

38 Scurious

42 Fly like a butterfly

43 Racing boats for rowers

45 Emerald is jewel

46 Prune

47 Butterball

48 Upset

51 Conference site of 1945

53 Superlative ending

54 Tiny

56 Desirable reviews

58 Scoundrel

59 Zimbabwesi, previously

61 Subdivision of a people

63 On land

65 Founder of modern chemistry

66 Yucatan people

67 Prickly rosebush

68 Black Sea port

70 Annoyed

71 Birthday suit of a weasel

74 Location on the Web

75 August's state

77 City near Offit AFB

78 Memorable time

79 Fresh and firm

81 Rascal

84 Faceted

86 Number of a birthday

87 Deserves

89 Put in a box

91 Academy Award winner of 1936

92 Coupon presenter

94 Have scraps

95 Door knocker

97 To a distance

98 Hereditary units

99 Moore of "G.I. Joe"

100 Idolized

103 Deuce toppers

104 FSU team member

108 Upset

110 Upset

112 Complete hastily

113 Function

114 Disney World attraction

115 Ireland

116 Boat over

117 Tuffed, worsted cloth

118 Put into words

119 Olle's partner in comedy

DOWN

1 Moral misjudgments

2 Tie tie

3 Former Spanish method in Africa

4 Sailing ships' high spots

5 Neodase charm

6 "Rhoda" co-star

7 Richard

8 Quick kiss

9 Holiday prelude

10 Ornamental tree

11 Car holders

12 Reproaches

13 First of the pot

14 Alter sentence

15 Haughtily

16 Like nuclear energy

17 First two notes

18 Ubiquitous bugs

19 Highland haze

24 Olympic sled

28 With due care

29 Excrete

32 Scurious

33 Tribe on the move

34 Part of a negotiation

35 Brief bright light

36 Upset

37 Coup group

38 Nettle

39 Upset

40 Cancer

41 Digging tool

44 Adorable one

45 Spills the beans

46 Follows orders

50 Tinty

52 Grate collection

55 Shrike's belief

57 Duchess of York

60 Medicinal quantities

61 Government's due

62 Cereal grass

64 Elko's Manner

65 Restaurant

66 Necklase unite

68 Academy Award

69 Funeral place

70 Even more deplorable

71 Stander

72 Dancing Castle

73 Low point

76 Subsequently

77 Roman Hades

80 Give priority

82 Minuscule

83 Catches in a net

85 Treasures

86 Shaffer's Mozart play

90 Religious reduce

93 Hearty and natural

94 Clinton press secretary Myers

96 Infamous lot

Let Sunday's Crossword Solved

ACROSS

1 THEATRICAL SKETCH

5 BROWNISH YELLOW

10 FOLLOW

15 FIRST MAN

19 SOUTHABOUT

20 HAZY PURPLE

21 CLASSIC TV WESTERN

22 1983 NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

23 UPSET

25 UPSET

27 INCognito

28 FREE-FOR-ALL

30 MOST DOOLIE

31 TEAM FOLLOW?

32 CALLS TO THE PHONE

33 OUTMODED SOUND SYSTEM

34 COUNTERBALANCE

37 CUPPA

38 SCURIOUS

42 FLY LIKE A BUTTERFLY

43 RACING BOATS FOR ROWERS

45 EMERALD IS JEWEL

46 PRUNE

47 BUTTERBALL

48 UPSET

51 CONFERENCE SITE OF 1945

53 SUPERLATIVE ENDING

54 TINY

56 DESIRABLE REVIEWS

58 SCOUNDREL

59 ZIMBABWESI, PREVIOUSLY

61 SUBDIVISION OF A PEOPLE

63 ON LAND

65 FOUNDER OF MODERN CHEMISTRY

66 YUCATAN PEOPLE

67 PRICKLY ROSEBUSH

68 BLACK SEA PORT

70 ANNOYED

71 BIRTHDAY SUIT OF A WEASEL

74 LOCATION ON THE WEB

75 AUGUST'S STATE

77 CITY NEAR OFFIT AFB

78 MEMORABLE TIME

79 FRESH AND FIRM

81 RASCAL

84 FACETED

86 NUMBER OF A BIRTHDAY

87 DESERVES

89 PUT IN A BOX

91 ACADEMY AWARD WINNER OF 1936

92 COUPON PRESENTER

94 HAVE SCRAPS

95 DOOR KNOCKER

97 TO A DISTANCE

98 HEREDITARY UNITS

99 MOORE OF "G.I. JOE"

100 IDOLIZED

103 DEUCE TOPPERS

104 FSU TEAM MEMBER

108 UPSET

110 UPSET

112 COMPLETE HASTILY

113 FUNCTION

114 DISNEY WORLD ATTRACTION

115 IRELAND

116 BOAT OVER

117 TUFFED, WORSTED CLOTH

118 PUT INTO WORDS

119 OLLE'S PARTNER IN COMEDY

DOWN

1 MORAL MISJUDGMENTS

2 TIE TIE

3 FORMER SPANISH METHOD IN AFRICA

4 SAILING SHIPS' HIGH SPOTS

5 NEODASE CHARM

6 "RHODA" CO-STAR

7 RICHARD

8 QUICK KISS

9 HOLIDAY PRELUDE

10 ORNAMENTAL TREE

11 CAR HOLDERS

12 REPROACHES

13 FIRST OF THE POT

14 ALTER SENTENCE

15 HAUGHTILY

16 LIKE NUCLEAR ENERGY

17 FIRST TWO NOTES

18 UBIGUITOUS BUGS

19 HIGHLAND HAZE

24 OLYMPIC SLED

28 WITH DUE CARE

29 EXCRETE

32 SCURIOUS

33 TRIBE ON THE MOVE

34 PART OF A NEGOTIATION

35 BRIEF BRIGHT LIGHT

36 UPSET

37 COUP GROUP

38 NETTLE

39 UPSET

40 CANCER

41 DIGGING TOOL

44 ADORABLE ONE

45 SPILLS THE BEANS

46 FOLLOWS ORDERS

50 TINTY

52 GRATE COLLECTION

55 SHRIKE'S BELIEF

57 DUCHESS OF YORK

60 MEDICINAL QUANTITIES

61 GOVERNMENT'S DUE

62 CEREAL GRASS

64 ELKO'S MANNER

65 RESTAURANT

66 NECKLASE UNITE

68 ACADEMY AWARD

69 FUNERAL PLACE

70 EVEN MORE DEPLORABLE

71 STANDER

72 DANCING CASTLE

73 LOW POINT

76 SUBSEQUENTLY

77 ROMAN HADES

80 GIVE PRIORITY

82 MINUSCULE

83 CATCHES IN A NET

85 TREASURES

86 SHAFFER'S MOZART PLAY

90 RELIGIOUS REDUCE

93 HEARTY AND NATURAL

94 CLINTON PRESS SECRETARY MYERS

96 INFAMOUS LOT

Experts see much lower growth for Arab Gulf countries this year

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The economies of six Arab Gulf states are still expected to grow in 1998 despite an expected decline in the oil sector because of the collapse of crude prices, experts said Friday.

But growth will be much lower than the bumper levels recorded in 1996 and 1997 because of strong oil prices and high government spending.

"The economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will slow down sharply this year because of lower oil prices but I don't think there will be a contraction," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, a prominent Saudi economist.

"There will be a decline in the oil sector but it should be noted that this sector contributes only a third of the gross domestic product (GDP)."

Mr. Abu Huleika gave no figures on projected growth but other experts expected it to be around two per cent if oil prices maintained

their current levels, their lowest since the price collapse in 1988.

Growth rates could exceed that level if oil prices averaged nearly \$15 during 1998, \$2 higher than their present level.

"Forecasts about oil prices have become like astrology... You can no longer predict what they will be even for the next week because there are now too many factors affecting the price movement," Mr. Abu Huleika said.

"But I can say that prices are unlikely to be as strong as in the previous two years. Other sectors, however, will continue their steady growth trend, especially the manufacturing and services sectors," he added.

The combined GDP in the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain,

Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — rose by between five and 15 per cent in 1996 and 1997 because of rises in crude

prices.

The increase to \$20 and \$19 a barrel respectively fetched the 17-year-old political, defence and economic alliance more than \$15 billion in extra income and encouraged members to boost spending.

Despite a steady expansion in the GCC private sector, it is still heavily reliant on government expenditure and overshooting spending projections over the past two years by some members, mainly Saudi Arabia, prompted more investment and higher growth rates in that sector.

"If oil prices maintain their current weak trend, then growth in the GCC will definitely be affected this year," said Henry Azzam, chief economist and assistant general manager of the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

"I am not saying there will be negative rates but economic growth will be much lower than the rates recorded in the previous

two years," he indicated.

GCC states export around 12 million barrels per day of oil and they could lose more than \$20 billion this year if oil prices do not firm up.

The present price level is in sharp contrast with their budget expectations, which include a price of more than \$15 by some members.

Economists said any decision by GCC governments to cut actual expenditure would bring about an economic slowdown. They said that maintaining projected spending levels could widen the deficit if oil prices remained weak.

"The private sector will be affected if there were cuts in expenditure because it always looks at how much the state spends," Mr. Azzam said.

"But the average oil price has to be taken into consideration for the whole of the year. We are still in the first quarter," he concluded.

IMF official sees no need to change Egypt pound rate

CAIRO (R) — International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials said Thursday there was no need for Egypt to alter its exchange rate at present and its new accounting standards were a good move for investment.

The IMF monitors Egypt's reform package, which includes privatisation, regulatory reform and an export drive.

IMF Middle East Department Executive Director Abdul Shakour Shaalan said one reason Egypt's dollar-pound relation did not need to be changed was because exports were rising.

"There is no need for any change either in the exchange system today or in the value of the pound in relation to the dollar," he said. "Because at a time when there is international turmoil, you don't want to give the market signals which may be the wrong signals."

He was speaking at a seminar on the financial crisis affecting South East Asian countries.

Egypt has a cushion of more than \$20 billion in foreign reserves and Mr. Shaalan said its short-term debt was \$1.5 billion.

"The reserves are there to protect a certain level of exchange should the need arise. The need has not arisen," he said. "We have now a situation where exports are beginning to rise and there is no pressure on the rate."

Economists say the government is committed to keeping the confidence of investors as it seeks private

capital inflows, making unlikely any sudden changes in the Egyptian pound's managed floatation against the dollar at about 3.40.

Egypt's Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali said this month he expected the level to remain for the next 24 months.

Speakers at the seminar said insufficient corporate disclosure and unsupervised banking systems were among the reasons for the Asia crisis, which started late last year when their dollar-linked exchange rates began to unravel.

World Bank chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa John Page said the crisis arose primarily from private sector transactions.

Egyptian officials say most invested capital in Egypt is in the relatively safe form of direct foreign or long-term portfolio investment.

Egypt has recently worked to improve transparency in corporate accounts and banking. In October it issued new accounting standards that Mr. Boutros-Ghali said then aimed to reassure investors with more transparency.

Mauro Mecagni, IMF representative in Egypt, said the new standards were a "positive move" to "enable foreign investors to have a better and more clear view on the banking level."

Public Enterprise Minister Atef Obeid said Egypt should continue to liberalise and speed up privatisation.

U.S. labour market seen worrying Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON (R) — Make no mistake: the tight U.S. labour market is a prime threat to the health of the nation's economy, which is entering the eighth year of an expansion with undiminished strength.

This is the message the Federal Reserve (Fed) is sending to investors who may have, instead, looked for Asian financial woes to lead U.S. policy makers to tighten monetary policy, and thus calm the booming economy and return it to a more sustainable rate of growth. However, the renewed focus on domestic inflation risks and mounting evidence that the economy has lost none of its buoyancy in the first quarter of the year has analysts again wondering whether interest rates will go up sooner rather than later.

"Southeast Asia is not turning out to be the big bear that it was supposed to be," Lyle Gramley, a former member of the Fed board of governors, said. "Whatever negative is coming from there is being swamped by a very, very strong domestic economy."

Sure, Asia's crisis is hurting U.S. firms. Falling exports to the region helped boost the trade deficit to \$12.04 billion in

January, a level not seen since the late 1980s. But as far as domestic conditions are concerned, recent reports paint a picture of an economy just roaring ahead — consumer spending, employment and production all are on a strong growth trend.

In a clear sign that the central bank has lost none of its zeal when it comes to the risk of overheating, the Fed warned this week in its latest survey of economic conditions that the nation's labour markets were "stretched to the limit."

In its so-called beige book, the basis for discussions at the Fed's next interest rate strategy meeting on March 31, the central bank reported that many U.S. firms were desperate to find workers, forcing them to offer "rather large wage increases."

Wage pressures are widely regarded as the prime cause for higher inflation, the Fed's natural nemesis.

Analysts said the unusually blunt report was aimed at reminding financial markets of the dangers of rising inflation. "Those were some pretty inflammatory comments," said Joel Naroff, Philadelphia-based economist at First Union Corp.

Low interest rates and the unusually mild winter weather have fuelled a nationwide construction boom. Builders across the country complain they cannot find enough workers to fill the flood of incoming orders.

"When we ask builders what's their most serious problem — it's the shortage of labour," Mr. David Seiders, chief economist at the national association of homebuilders, said. "It's the big one. We see it in all parts of the country."

Consumer prices are held in check by cheaper energy prices, but without the typically volatile food and energy components the widely watched consumer price index in February showed its biggest gain in 10 months, the government said Thursday.

Retail sales are rising solidly as consumers remain as confident about their economic future as ever before. Not surprisingly, most economists are predicting economic growth in the first three months of the year will come in above the level that most would consider sustainable in the long run.

"There's a real good chance that we'll have first-quarter growth of three to 3.5 per cent," Mr.

Naroff said. "Even if Asia were to cut 1 per cent off that growth rate, that doesn't cut a whole lot of slack in the economy."

Fed governor Roger Ferguson told a banking conference in Columbus, Ohio, Thursday he saw Asia's woes shaving 0.75 of a percentage point off economic growth this year.

So far, most analysts rule out a rate increase at the next Fed meeting later this month. The key overnight federal funds rate has been steady at 5.5 per cent for about a year, and few see it going higher in the first half of 1998. After that, a growing number of economists say all bets are off.

Higher rates would slow the economy by raising the cost of borrowing money, putting a lid on investment and spending.

"If there's any move, it's going to be a tightening," Mr. Gramley said.

First Union's Naroff is also putting his money on a rate rise in the second half of the year. The writing is already on the wall, he said. "The Fed is clearly saying 'we're yelling at the top of our lungs — don't forget about the domestic economy and the implications that tight labour markets could have as we move forward.'"

Iran to limit dollar sales to Iranians travelling abroad

TEHRAN (AFP) — The government is to tighten restrictions on dollar sales to Iranians travelling abroad as the country's hard currency oil receipts have tumbled, Iranian newspapers have reported.

The restrictions are due to go into effect with the start of the Iranian new year, March 21, but some state bank branches already are refusing to sell dollars to private individuals as they await the new rules, they said. Iran's banks, all of which are nationalised, currently are permitted to sell between \$300

and \$1,000 to private individuals travelling outside Iran according to the destination.

The banks use the official exchange rate of 3,000 rials to the dollar for the sales.

Some Iranian newspapers reported that banks could from now on sell currency to travellers at the rate of 4,720 rials to the dollar.

That rate is already in use for certain commercial export transactions and is closer to the dollar's rate on the black market, where it runs higher than 5,000 rials to the dollar.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Conditions are good for taking care of old business, and it will be popping up all around you. It's your own fault for not having done it before. What you're going to have to do, most likely, is simply follow orders. You could be rewarded with the admiration of your peers and an older person.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is an excellent day for travel, visiting friends, and having experiences that will remain fond memories for years to come. You can plan your Kodak moment. Figure out what would make a great picture in your photo album, then gather up a bunch of friends and relatives to make it happen.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you're trying to talk an older person into lending you money, be or she is going to point out that you could take on a second job — and might even have one for you. Whatever is offered, consider it carefully. That could be the way to achieve a goal you've held for a long time.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) One of your cantankerous friends is speaking up more boldly. He or she is a hard worker, and somebody you admire. Well, unbeknownst to you, this person admires you right back. Ask for advice on a matter you've been worried about. Not only will you get helpful hints, but you could also get more encouragement than you expected.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your energy level is high, but your stress level might be, too. Someone you love is leaning on you. He or she could even be taking you off the couch and into a second job. It looks like the money is coming in from work you're doing, and you and your sweetheart could be working hand in hand. That's a remarkably romantic thing to do.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Again, romance is the theme. You hereby have permission to be whimsical, ridiculous and crazy in love. Don't just sit on the couch watching TV and waiting for Prince or Princess Charming to knock on your door. Fine your true love where people are working together for a worthy cause. If you've already found love, go ahead and enjoy it today.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Conditions look good for a massive renovation project. Is your house just the way you want it? If not, why not? You don't need to spend lots of money, just a little time and attention. Get your roommates involved. You'll be surprised at how much better you all get along once you spend a day working together.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If a friend has a skill you admire, see if you can talk that person into teaching you. This could be anything from pruning rosebushes to playing the bongos. You've got plenty of friends who would be delighted to show you how. One in particular has been hoping for months that you'd ask. Go ahead. A marvellous friendship could develop.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) What would be the job of your dreams? If you can visualise it, you can probably have it. Give it a little thought right now. Go through the wanted ads in the Sunday paper whether you're happily employed or not. It's possible you'll find something that will lead you in a new direction. Give it a try.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're probably not that interested in the big game to TV. You're more interested in putting yourself through school, putting your kids through school or putting your parents through school. This is a major theme for the next month, so read the catalogues and figure out what to do next. There's no point in resisting.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are still being pinched to find practical uses for your talent. The answer might be a little farther away than you thought. There's a service you could perform that could make you quite wealthy. Explore your possibilities. The more you know, the more you can provide for those who need your talents.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You or one of your friends could come up with an excellent idea first thing this morning. If you launch a new endeavour before lunch time, it's practically guaranteed to be a success. Don't wait until this evening. There could be a hassle concerning money.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Lead player
- USSR in the USSR
- Jury
- Tibetan monk
- Cordelia's father
- Bring together
- Called
- "Born Free" lioness
- Brief summation
- Ex-White House intern of note
- Rower
- Compass dir.
- Russian space station
- Little tykes
- Drug user
- Raw minerals
- Paycheck deduction fig.
- Now
- Lounge singer of note
- Removed ties
- Yellow-billed rail
- Western alliance, briefly
- Flat or Maddox
- Long gone bird
- D.C. VIP
- Picnic pest
- That's revolting!
- First Lady of note
- Capital of Vietnam
- Greek liqueur
- Diva's song
- Giant with 100 eyes
- Norwegian king
- Immense
- Tic
- Pierre's pop
- Fencing sword

DOWN

- Slender
- Mexican treat
- Call from the pews
- Transmitter
- Skip town
- Jail room
- Patient to a doctor
- Shrimp in Shrewsbury
- Faced
- Walted wad
- Choose
- Remain
- Slang affirmative
- Garfield, e.g.
- One-million connection?
- Big wheel
- Goddess of peace
- Splits apart
- Equal scores
- Boston fish choice
- Duck feathers
- Concepts
- Blanche
- Boxer Iron Mike
- Annoying fit
- 60s do
- Perfect even pedals
- Philosophy?
- Sweetheart
- Cellular letters
- Yes, to Yves
- Scout group
- Unprincipled, crafty fellow
- Instrument with seven pedals
- Actress
- Swenson
- Brock and Costello
- log
- Russian ruler
- Shore
- Selma leader
- Thurman or Archibald
- Possesses

Peanuts

HERE'S MY IDEA... SPIKE IS A FRIEND OF MICKEY MOUSE, RIGHT?

WELL, AT LEAST HE SAYS HE IS...

AND MICKEY MOUSE IS VERY WEALTHY, RIGHT?

WHY DON'T WE CALL HIM ON THE PHONE, AND ASK HIM TO SEND US A LIMO?

THAT'S MAYBE EVEN A STRETCH LIMO.

Andy Capp

MY FOLKS WERE SAYING WOULD YOU BE OFFENDED IF THEY PAID FOR US TO HAVE A FEW DAYS VACATION?

YES! I WOULD! THERE'S A LIMIT, I KNOW!

THAT LOT IS TRYING TO TAKE ON TOO MUCH...

BEFORE YOU KNOW IT THEY'D START DROPPING BEHIND WITH THE RENT MONEY!

Mutt'n'Jeff

I'M SELLING A SALVE THAT'S A WONDER! I'LL MAKE A SALE HERE!

MUTT, IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL SALVE! GOOD FOR FOR POLISHING HIGH-CLASS STRINGS ONLY!

GUS HAS A DOG THAT GOT ABOUT TWO INCHES OF ITS TAIL OUT TO ITS NATURAL LENGTH AGAIN! THIS SALVE—

AND I SUPPOSE THE TAIL GROW OUT TO ITS NATURAL LENGTH AGAIN! A WHOLE NEW DOG GROW ON IT!

NO! HE APPLIED THIS SALVE TO THE PIECE OF TAIL AND A WHOLE NEW DOG GROW ON IT!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

Home Fitness Center

"The patented elliptical motion burns 50% more calories than ordinary channel changers!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NIHKT

ILDOY

NOOPUC

IGGLOO

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: PROBE ELUDE ADJOIN MANAGE
Answer: A nap on his office couch gave him this — A "DREAM" JOB

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Government completes design for tourism development project in Dead Sea region

**** THE GOVERNMENT** has recently finalized preparing the general design for the tourism development of the Dead Sea region. Over the long-term and until the year 2010, the project comprises building 34,000 bed units that include all means of accommodation at hotels, touristic villages and villas. The tourism development project also covers the possibility of setting up youth camps and providing accommodation to the workers, in the project which involves infrastructure estimated to cost JD65 million.

According to informed sources, the number of bed units has been spread over three main sectors within the general framework of the area of the study. As such, 12,500 units will be set up in the Suweineh zone and another 12,500 units in the zone. The remaining 9,000 bed units will be established in the Zaza zone in addition to another 800 hotel units to be built outside the area covered by the study. Such hotel units, which will serve the tourists who seek "cultural tourism and exploration tourism," will be set up in two areas, one near Mount Nebo

and the second near the city of Karak.

The sources indicated that the proposed tourism development project was prepared within a general framework that aims at achieving a balance between the economic development for the area covered by the study and preserving the natural environment within the framework called "the natural regional reservation" planned to be set up on a 60-kilometre long area.

All the documents related to the infrastructure are ready at the Jordan Valley Authority and will be implemented upon the availability of financial allocations estimated at JD36 million for the Suweineh zone and JD29 million for the Zaza zone," the sources clarified. They added that some infrastructure services have been provided inside the "service road," which extends for three kilometres, at a cost of JD3 million.

The sources stressed that the studies indicate that the project is not an entertainment in the first place but that it concentrates on therapeutic tourism through utilising the natural resources available in the water and mud of the Dead Sea (AJ Dustour).

Trading at the Amman Financial Market continues to drop

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For the second week in a row, trading volume at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) declined due to fears that the market following a government draft law to "regulate" the saving and provident funds of the private sector, brokers said Friday.

The AFM weekly bulletin indicated that the trading volume amounted to JD4 million in the last week compared with JD7.8 million a week ago, or 48.7 per cent decline.

The bulletin showed that 3.5 million shares were traded in the market through 3,224 contracts with a daily turnover of JD1

million.

Earlier this month, the government proposed a draft law to regulate the private sector saving and provident funds which amount to more than JD250 million.

The government assurances that the proposed law was aimed at "safeguarding" the interest of 150,000 members in these funds, failed to alleviate the fears and prompted most of the private sector companies to consider liquidating their funds.

"The fear that the funds will liquidate their shares at the stock exchange was the major reason for the decline in the trading volume," said Amer Muasher, an AFM broker.

"The rumour that the

Arab Bank has decided to liquidate its saving fund which amounts to JD30 million has enhanced the fears of the investors," Mr. Muasher told the Jordan Times.

He was referring to the Arab Bank, the Kingdom's largest financial institution, to liquidate its saving fund for fear that the government would enforce the draft law.

Mr. Muasher said that despite assurances by Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour that the law is subjected to negotiation between the government and the concerned parties, "investors were reluctant to buy shares in the market."

"Their fears are not justified because nothing has been done and the proposed law will not be enforced

overnight," he added.

Naim Nageeb, another broker, indicated that more than 70 per cent of the saving funds are invested in the stock market.

"Any decision to liquidate these funds will flood the stock market with shares which means that supply will exceed demand and lead to sharp decline in share prices," Mr. Nageeb said.

"Investors are not ready to buy now and some of them are considering to sell what they have before prices drop in the market," he added.

Mr. Nageeb indicated that most of the AFM trading concentrated on the industrial sector, which amounted to JD2.4 million or 61 per cent of the total trading.

The brokers said that most of the trading in the industrial sector focused on the Vegetable Oil Company and Arab Pharmaceutical Company.

The banking sector came second with JD1.1 million, followed by services sector with JD400,000 and insurance sector with JD37,000.

The AFM bulletin showed that the general price index has dropped to 167.5 point in the last week trading, down from 171.5 point a week ago, or 3.4 points.

Out of the 94 companies that changed hands in the market, 12 firms recorded increase in prices, 64 registered decrease while the prices of 18 firms witnessed no change in its prices.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8338	0.6011	1.4986	130.36	1.4180	1803.20	2.0865	6.1447
DE Mark	0.5483	-	0.3273	0.8174	71.10	0.7724	885.16	1.1286	3.3607
GB Sterling	1.6936	3.0606	-	2.4929	216.89	2.3890	2989.44	3.4388	10.2211
CH Franc	0.6673	1.2226	0.4007	-	87.02	0.5452	1202.37	137.73	4.0973
JP Yen	0.0077	1.4064	0.4606	1.1492	-	1.0868	13.83	188.44	4.7137
CA Dollar	0.7052	1.2915	0.4233	1.0529	1.09	-	1271.92	1.4558	4.3294
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0166	0.3328	0.8630	1386.19	0.7860	-	11.44	3.4045
NL Guilder	0.4841	88.73	0.2908	72.62	63.03	0.6857	872.58	-	2.9740
FR Franc	0.1627	0.2982	0.0977	24.3720	21.18	0.2306	33.51	33.6100	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7608	0.3770	3.6408	0.3055	3.6728	1527.70	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2904	0.5317	5.1381	0.4306	5.1803	2154.72	4.8181
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1880	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	407.28	0.9107
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	3.9483	-	3.68	0.8102	8.74	4082.25	8.0610
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0392	1.0202	-	0.0839	1.00	418.61	0.8381
Kuwait Dinar	3.2738	2.3212	12.2759	1.2242	11.95	-	12.02	6001.47	0.9383
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0213	0.1026	0.9913	0.0832	-	416.95	0.9301
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4641	2.4553	0.2488	2.3832	0.1999	2.4041	-	2.2360
Egyptian	0.2927	0.2076	1.0880	0.1104	1.0658	0.0894	1.0752	447.22	-

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	12.34	12.28
W. Texas	14.35	14.39
Bonny	12.34	12.26
Dubai	10.85	10.90
U.L. Gas	138.00	138.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4892	0.16026	0.3999	34.7754
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4896	0.16386	0.40841	35.5174
KW Dinar	3.2739	8.00001	1.96812	4.91169	426.985
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.86618	1.59439	3.97931	346.021
CY Pound	1.8861	3.4219	1.1205	2.7959	243.11


Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	291.5	292.4
Silver (oz's)	5.84	5.97
Platinum (oz's)	410.5	412.5
AL (3 Months)	1455	1457
CU (3 Months)	1756	1760
Zinc (3 Months)	1064	1067
Lead (3 Months)	552	554
NI (3 Months)	5490	5510

Libor Fixing					
Period	1-M	3-M	6-M	1-Y	Year
USD	5.7266	5.7266	5.7422	5.8516	-
GBP	7.4844	7.5621	7.5621	7.5873	-
JPY	0.7969	0.7944	0.7931	0.8875	-
DEM	3.5625	3.5659	3.5483	3.8046	-
FRF	3.5254	1.3958	1.4886	1.6280	-
CHF	1.3333	3.5898	3.5875	3.8694	-
ITL	5.6940	5.5400	5.1390	-	-

Main Equity Indices					
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High
New York	DOW JONES	5811.27	8.22	0.09	5855.88
New York	S&P 500	1089.96	0.22	0.02	1094.46
London	FT-SE 100	5890	-7.9	-0.13	6105.8
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16830.47	151.45	0.91	16878.9
Paris	CAC 40	3686.82	-2.16	-0.06	3717.32
Frankfurt	DAX	5001.56	65.23	1.32	5014.5

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	149.33	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1904	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	273.6	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	95	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	27.5	Spot
Tea (kg/kg)	166	Spot
Banana (\$/bush)	9	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	400	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1807	1.1868
DE Mark	0.387	0.3889
CH Franc	0.4742	0.4766
FR Franc	0.1155	0.1161
JP Yen	0.5436	0.5463
NL Guilder	0.3435	0.3482
IT Lira	0.3928	0.3948

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET													
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SUWEINAH													
TELEPHONE: 607111 / 607175													
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (14/03/1998 - 18/03/1998)													
WEEKLY REPORT													
													
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
INDEX	LOW				EXECUTED								
345,000	330,000 ARAB BANK	13.8	1.19	26	720	246140	339.50	346.00	337.00	337.00	-2.50	339,083	016
1,850	1,760 JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	31	84283	144450	1.77	1.80	1.71	1.72	-0.05	1,738	201
1,390	1,330 BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	4	2350	3168	1.34	1.35	1.34	1.35	+0.01	1,340	015
1,730	1,680 INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.07	101	80805	140108	1.73	1.76	1.71	1.72	-0.01	1,734	458
5,100	4,950 THE HOUSING BK.	29.2	1.99	26	78427	391021	4.98	5.00	4.88	4.88	-0.10	4,986	157
1,920	1,820 JOR. RURAL BANK	-	0.00	10	10182	19322	1.90	1.90	1.89	1.90	-0.01	1,898	068
1,740	1,650 JOR. CITY BANK	3.9	0.00	22	22150	14795	1.69	1.68	1.66	1.66	-0.03	1,665	111
2,700	2,700 ARAB JOR. INV. BK. / NEW	0.00	0.00	3	16666	44998	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	-0.00	2,700	333
2,110	2,030 JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.0	4.87	45	26704	53639	2.03	2.03	1.96	1.97	-0.06	2,008	144
1,730	1,610 JOR. INV. FUND BANK / NEW	-	0.00	4	2240	3829	1.72	1.71	1.71	1.71	-0.01	1,709	065
1,860	1,800 BELTA AL-KAL (BELTA)	-	14.85	26	9100	8168	1.86	1.95	1.88	1.89	-0.07	1,898	455
BANKS SECTOR													
298 333729 1069637 INDEX NUMBER : 233.69 CHANGE : 0.99%													
2,400	2,000 JOR. FUNDING INSUR.	5.6	12.56	10	15300	32551	2.24	2.15	1.98	1.99	-0.27	2,128	695
1,310	1,340 HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.4	0.00	2	500	678	1.24	1.25	1.25	1.25	+0.01	1,250	011
2,050	1,900 ARAB LIFE INSUR.	8.2	0.00	2	2100	4305	2.05	2.05	2.05	2.05	-0.00	2,050	095
INSURANCE SECTOR													
13 17600 37106 INDEX NUMBER : 121.50 CHANGE : 1.24%													
2,140	2,000 JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.8	4.95	55	21758	44171	2.06	2.06	2.01	2.02	-0.04	2,030	145
2,250	2,250 IRID ELECTRICITY	12.7	5.37	3	250	535	2.25	2.14	2.14	2.14	-0.11	2,140	008
5,080	3,990 NIKEN MINERALS	60.2	0.00	2	4500	24420	5.08	5.50	5.33	5.50	+0.42	5,424	363
1,170	1,000 NATL. PORTFOLIO	41.9	0.00	30	31800	33808	1.14	1.12	1.04	1.05	-0.09	1,063	636
1,060	1,060 REAL ESTATE INV.	13.9	6.00	3	300	301	1.06	1.01	1.00	1.00	-0.06	1,048	009
1,450	1,370 JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	19.5	0.00	4	1600	1700	1.37	1.37	1.24	1.24	-0.13	1,300	044
9,350	8,700 ALRAI	9.5	4.46	16	8250	76745	9.25	9.35	9.24	9.29	+0.04	9,302	413
7,000	7,000 AD-DUSTOUR	25.1	3.51	2	1025	6816	7.00	6.65	6.65	6.65	-0.35	6,650	057
4,600	3,950 ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.8	1.83	11	5200	22764	4.43	4.41	4.30	4.37	-0.04	4,378	051
970	970 KARA EDUCATION	-	0.00	11	5250	4980	0.96	0.96	0.93	0.94	-0.02	958	111
1,790	1,710 UNITED CO.	7.0	6.96	56	32050	51030	1.73	1.64	1.57	1.58	-0.15	1,592	441
700	660 UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	3	650	436	0.68	0.67	0.67	0.67	-0.01	671	013
SERVICES SECTOR													
206 112591 267052 INDEX NUMBER : 119.55 CHANGE : 1.48%													
1,160	1,160 ATTAKOOSH	-	0.00	11	20100	22583	1.16	1.16	1.10	1.13	-0.03	1,120	718
3,060	2,690 JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.7	3.96	95	24063	66995	2.95	2.95	2.73	2.78	-0.17	2,784	040
3,450	3,350 JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.2	3.01	2	67	221	3.35	3.32	3.32	3.32	-0.03	3,299	000
6,750	6,600 ARAB POTASH CO.	34.3	2.24	3	300	1790	6.20	6.00	5.90	5.90	-0.30	5,967	000
2,750	2,750 JOR. PETROL-REFINERY	10.1	8.50	61	5762	60438	10.70	10.75	10.40	10.40	-0.34	2,688	000
1,150	1,150 MOLEN INDUSTRIES	10.1	0.55	4	600	714	1.29	1.23	1.17	1.17	-0.12	1,190	060
1,350	1,250 INDUSTRIAL COMM. COR.	-	0.00	15	3550	4162	1.27	1.23	1.12	1.12	-0.15	1,172	071
6,500	6,450 JOR. WORSTED MILLS	10.3	3.13	3	450	2915	6.50	6.50	6.40	6.40	-0.10	6,478	011
5,700	4,450 ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.1	3.90	429	115503	598169	5.37	5.38	5.09	5.13	-0.24	5,179	1283
2,480	2,450 JORDAN DAILY	6.4	9.45	1	100	288	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	-0.00	2,480	006
1,300	1,260 JOR. PIPES MANUF.	15.4	6.45	4	1180	1463	1.27	1.24	1.24	1.24	-0.03	1,240	026
2,180	2,180 GENERAL MINING	14.2	3.38	2	219	453	2.18	2.07	2.07	2.07	-0.11	2,068	027
8,000	8,000 ARAB CHEM. DISTRI.	23.6	3.30	4	1100	8440	8.00	7.70	7.60	7.70	-0.30	7,691	163
1,240	1,410 NATL. CEMENT WORKS	27.9	0.00	11	1233	16517	1.23	1.15	1.15	1.15	-0.08	1,187	028
1,660	570 JOR. SULPHUR-CHEN.	0.00	0.00	59	44300	27152	0.63	0.64	0.59	0.61	-0.02	613	984
1,470	1,220 ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.0	5.26	57	27390	36854	1.39	1.39	1.31	1.33	-0.06	1,346	548
1,540	1,540 KAMTHER INVEST.	51.2	0.00	3	950	494	1.54	1.52	1.52	1.52	-0.02	1,520	048
1,050	1,040 UNIV. MOON. INDUS.	487.6	0.00	370	347320	346515	1.03	1.10	1.03	1.07	+0.04	1,058	5455
1,840	1,730 JOR. INV. RESOURCES	10.1	12.82	30	28812	22981	1.81	1.82	1.77	1.78	-0.03	1,784	340
1,560	1,440 NATL. CEMENT	14.0	4.70	12	4980	7472	1.51	1.51	1.48	1.49	-0.02	1,500	069
1,080	1,000 JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	18.7	0.00	157	175344	180306	1.03	1.05	1.00	1.02	-0.01	1,024	192
1,470	1,340 EL. SAYS READY WEAR	47.5	0.00	18	20706	29263	1.41	1.43	1.35	1.35	-0.06	1,413	276
1,230	1,150 INTL. TOBACCO	8.5	0.00	37	21446	25406	1.20	1.20	1.18	1.18	-0.02	1,195	047
1,220	1,000 UNION CR. & VEG.	0.00	0.00	84	71225	75301	1.10	1.10	1.02	1.02	-0.08	1,057	1583
850	860 JORDAN STEEL	35.7	6.33	105	123556	98393	0.79	0.82	0.78	0.78	-0.05	796	824
470	610 MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.9	15.63	59	87450	52794	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.64	-0.02	633	379
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR													
1925 1353952 184324 INDEX NUMBER : 110.97 CHANGE : 1.39%													
GRAND TOTAL 2442 1817872 2218219 INDEX NUMBER : 104.57 CHANGE : 1.267%													
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
INDEX	LOW				EXECUTED								
1,020	910 EXPORT & PET. BANK. TSK	17.4	0.00	20	42571	29428	0.96	0.98	0.93	0.94	-0.02	691	213
380	320 CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	-	0.00	1	500	165	0.35	0.33	0.33	0.33	-0.02	330	013
680	370 JOR. GRADE TSK	0.00	0.00	32	123950	48001	0.39	0.40	0.38	0.39	-0.01	387	251
630	480 KAZI-CONCOR-CEMENT	-	0.00	16	7080	4858	0.63	0.70	0.63	0.68	+0.05	688	142
520	430 ARAB FIN. INVEST.	-	0.00	35	48300	21289	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.43	-0.01	441	483
740	710 UNION INV. SOK	-	0.00	44	177945	41286	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.74	+0.01	732	809
710	680 AL-DAMULHAN TSK	68.1	0.00	8	1568	1568	0.69	0.71	0.67	0.71	+0.02	634	025
820	820 AL-BADR INV. GROUP	341.5	0.00	2	536	520	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	-0.00	970	006
2,000	2,000 CENTURY INV. GROUP	-	0.00	2	20000	40000	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	-0.00	2,000	278
530	400 ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	11	14000	6540	0.49	0.50	0.46	0.46	-0.03	447	040
360	360 JOR. BORACIO & CHEM.	0.00	0.00	2	2000	741	0.40	0.40	0.36	0.36	-0.04	359	013
360	240 ARAB INTL. INV. SOK	39.2	0.00	164	490773	155509	0.31	0.34	0.31	0.34	+0.03	323	916
370	140 JOR. INDUS. HATCH-JEMCO	-	0.00	2	500	65	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.13	-0.01	130	029
380	280 KAZI TEKSTILE	-	0.00	6	1400	540	0.37	0.35	0.35	0.35	-0.02	350	064
410	230 ARAB BANK & NOTES	0.00	0.00	42	13	50	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	-0.00	180	011
690	610 MID-EAST PHARM. IND.	-	0.00	15	40600	23595	0.65	0.67	0.64	0.65	-0.02	567	427
450	430 ARAB ELECT. IND.	-	0.00	5	7512	3003	0.43	0.42	0.41	0.41	-0.02	410	125
1,450	1,380 UNION TOBACCO TSK	-	0.00	39	52522	64993	1.45	1.50	1.45	1.45	-0.05	1,528	1050
730	700 KAZI PHARM.	-	0.00	26	43305	29244	0.71	0.71	0.70	0.71	-0.01	707	414
680	640 ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	-	0.00	39	39050	25186	0.64	0.63	0.63	0.63	-0.01	645	088
580	250 INDUS. ENG.	-	0.00	38	87460	25278	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	+0.01	289	1251
580	530 INDUS. GENIACIK	13.6	0.00	11	7600	4125	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.52	-0.02	529	195
420	370 PHARM. SAN. P. CONV.	-	0.00	4	7270	2835	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	-0.00	390	182
580	580 KAZI. POLYESTER	0.00	0.00	78	101250	51568	0.54	0.54	0.50	0.54	-0.04	569	011
160	470 OPTICALS READING TSK	-	0.00	7	8000	2818	0.60	0.62	0.60	0.60	-0.02	552	170
1,670	1,200 READY MIX CONCRETE	12.7	0.00	1	10000	10500	1.10	1.05	1.05	1.05	-0.05	1,050	333
700	670 KAZI ALUMINIUM. TSK	94.6	0.00	35	36694	15747	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.68	-0.01	630	305
1,010	1,000 ARAB INTL. FOOD FACT.	0.00	0.00	9	10000	39510	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.00	1,000	125
910	1,040 MURIDIAN	2771.2	0.00	15	6294	6631	1.09	1.07	1.06	1.06	-0.03	1,065	155
910	770 KAZI. PRINT CO. TSK	13.7	8.62	67	119000	76005	0.88	0.91	0.88	0.90	+0.02	645	1488
410	280 KAZI. MILLS. ENG. MAMCO	-	0.00	69	153720	59943	0.40	0.40	0.38	0.39	-0.01	390	512
GRAND TOTAL 782 1494585 805886													

Mansell returns to race track for Ford

LONDON (AFP) — Former world Formula One champion Nigel Mansell is to return to the track in selected rounds of this year's Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship it was announced Friday.

Britain's most successful driver, with 31 Grand Prix victories, will contest the BTCC races with Ford Mondeo racing as teammate to regular drivers Will Hoy and Craig Baird.

Announcing his BTCC programme, the 43-year-old Mansell said: "Joining Ford Mondeo Racing to tackle the most competitive touring car championship in the world is an exciting challenge and one which I'm looking forward to immensely."

"Ford has been with me since the start of my career, from my first race in Formula Ford, through my Formula One debut in a Lotus-Ford, to my IndyCar World Series win in a Ford-powered Lola. It's therefore appropriate I should be driving a Ford Mondeo in my return to racing in Britain."

It will be the first time since 1993 that

Mansell has raced in the UK. His last appearance here was also in a BTCC Ford Mondeo when he crashed.

BTCC race organiser Alan Gow welcomed Mansell's return: "We're looking forward to seeing him. Nigel is a great driver and a huge favourite with the British race goers."

Ford director Martin Whitaker added: "Nigel has extensive experience of developing and racing cars at the highest level of competition and we are confident this will be of great benefit to the Mondeo touring car programme."

Mansell made his Grand Prix debut in 1980, later switching from Lotus to Williams, with whom he won his first Grand Prix. After a spell with Ferrari he returned to Williams to win the 1992 World Championship. The following year he won the IndyCar title in the U.S. His last Grand Prix appearance was with the McLaren team in 1995.

Cole pulls out of England squad

LONDON (AFP) — Andy Cole has joined the list of Manchester United absentees from the England squad for next Wednesday's World Cup warm-up in Switzerland.

The Old Trafford striker completed 90 minutes as United tumbled out of the Champions' League against Monaco on Wednesday, but picked up a knock and was ruled out when England boss Glenn Hoddle spoke to Alex Ferguson on Friday.

Ferguson had already signalled that Paul Scholes — who faces a knee operation that places a serious doubt over his World Cup hopes — and brothers Gary and Phil Neville would be missing.

The only positive news for Hoddle was that midfielder Nicky Butt did not aggravate the calf injury he sustained against West Ham last week. Butt, along with United team-mates David Beckham and Teddy Sheringham, joined up with the England party at their Buckinghamshire hotel Friday, ahead of the first training session.

I'm staying at Arsenal — Wenger

LONDON (AFP) — Arsene Wenger insisted on Thursday that he intends to stay with English Premiership giants Arsenal despite speculation that Paris St. Germain are keen for him to take control of the ailing French club.

Reports in France suggest that Frenchman Wenger is at the head of a wanted-list compiled by PSG's new president, Charles Bierry — a close friend of Wenger's.

Former television and communications magnate Bierry is also adamant the new man in charge must also speak perfect French and says: "My first priority is to find a coach, and the quicker the better. It will not be someone I don't know."

Those remarks, reported by highly respected French sports newspaper L'Equipe, sparked immediate speculation that Wenger was the main target and that the two men would be meeting in Paris.

But Wenger said: "I have a contract at Highbury until 1999 and I will respect that contract."

"I am very happy at Highbury and I'm happy trying to achieve something here."

"Of course, PSG is an attractive club and I respect it a lot, but I can only say again that I am happy with Arsenal."

Bierry, the former head of communications at Canal Plus television, may now decide to turn to either of two high-profile Italian bosses — former international coach Arrigo Sacchi and Marcello Lippi of Serie A champions Juventus. Lippi recently rejected a three-year deal worth six million pounds (\$10 million) from Real Madrid while Sacchi is reported to have rejected four separate offers from English clubs.

Wenger, meanwhile, remains totally committed to Arsenal's bid for honours on two domestic fronts — the Premiership title and the FA Cup.

Wenger, believed to be a target for Spanish giants Real Madrid earlier this season, also recently insisted he has no immediate interest in becoming coach to the French national team, a job which the present incumbent Aime Jacquet has announced he will vacate immediately after the World Cup finals.

Wenger said: "My name has often been linked to that job — but not by me. Aime Jacquet told me two months ago that he would retire from it after the World Cup, but my work is with Arsenal."

'Abdul-Jabbar busted for marijuana possession'

TORONTO (AP) — Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's career leading scorer, was arrested by U.S. Customs officials Sunday for possession of six grams of marijuana at Pearson International Airport, the Toronto Star reported Friday.

The newspaper said Abdul-Jabbar, 50, was fined \$500 before being allowed to board a flight to Los Angeles.

Peel Regional Police Supt. Blair Foley said the former Los Angeles Lakers center was released without conditions, although his name was entered into Canadian and U.S. police computers.

Foley said a U.S. Customs dog detected the marijuana, which the former Los Angeles Lakers center concealed in a glass vial.

"He turned the drugs over to us," Foley said. "He was searched for further drugs, but there weren't any."

Foley said Abdul-Jabbar was arrested for possession of a controlled drug. He was not charged by Canadian police, who used their discretionary powers to leave the matter with U.S. Customs.

U.S. Customs spokesman Cherise Miles said any U.S. citizen caught with a small amount of marijuana is fined \$500 and required to fill out four sets of Customs forms. The newspaper said calls to Abdul-Jabbar's Los Angeles company went unanswered.

Meanwhile, misdemeanor battery and false imprisonment charges against Abdul-Jabbar were dismissed Thursday by a Los Angeles judge who ruled he had complied with orders to complete 36 hours of anger management counseling.

West Los Angeles Municipal Court Commissioner Gary L. Bindman said Abdul-Jabbar followed the Jan. 29 court order, which also required a \$5,000 payment to a police department program for at-risk youth.

Jerry Cohen, a Universal Studios music editor, accused Abdul-Jabbar of attacking him after a traffic dispute April 20, 1997. Cohen and Abdul-Jabbar settled a civil lawsuit in December.

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First Division Basketball Championship Jazireh manage difficult win over Ahli as 1st round concludes

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While having the second round as well as the playoffs ahead to determine this year's champions, Thursday night's Jazireh-Ahli match gave fans an indication of what this year's First Division Basketball Championship still has to offer.

As things stood before the match, Al Jazireh had easily beaten all their opponents including former champs Al Orthodoxy 92-84 while Al Ahli had lost 74-49 to Al Orthodoxy.

However, it seemed like a different Ahli lineup that gave titleholders Al Jazireh a hard time and won the first half 36-33 before eventually losing the match 75-69.

Al Jazireh had an early 16-7 lead before Al Ahli outscored them 12-0 to take the lead at 19-6.

While both teams alternated at the lead, Al Jazireh's Ma'an Odeh carried four fouls while Al Ahli veteran Yousef Zaghoul led his teammates and scored 18 of his 26 points as Al Ahli won the first half 36-33.

Both teams started the second half on a fast note, with Zaghoul tying the game at 43-43 after a three-point shot.

Al Jazireh took a 48-45 lead and continued from then on led by the energetic Yousef Abu Bakr. However, scoring remained close.

Al Ahli's Zaghoul and Faisal Nsour were given a rest and with centre Ramez Hammoudh missing the match, bench players carried the team and gave their fans something to cheer about.

Mohammad Shamali led Al Ahli as

they trailed 67-62 before a three-point shot by Nsour narrowed the gap to 67-65.

Husam Lutfi scored for Al Jazireh but Zaghoul sank in another three-point shot, still trailing 70-68.

With less than a minute remaining Al Ahli pinned their hope on Zaghoul which ultimately proved to be a tactical mistake, as the worn out player missed a three-point shot and another three free shots that could have altered the outcome of the match.

Jazireh's Odeh came back to score and ended the match with a precious 75-69 win.

Al Jazireh thus ended the first round atop the standings with an unbeaten record. The top-three play-offs following the second round will determine the winner.

Insiders expected Al Ahli, who came in second last year, to be an easy prey this season especially after their dismal results early in the event.

After struggling with technical and managerial obstacles for the past two seasons they seem to be trying to get the right combination while improving the physical and overall team conditioning in the course of match-plays.

Standings after Thursday's match

Team	P	W	L	Sf	Sa	Pts
Jazireh	5	5	0	429	309	10
Ahli	5	3	2	351	320	8
Orthodoxy	4	3	1	325	239	7
Jeel	4	2	2	250	287	6
Hussein	4	0	4	226	328	4
Jalil	4	0	4	213	311	4

Chelsea, Stuttgart advance in Cup Winners' Cup

PARIS (AFP) — Chelsea, Vicenza, Stuttgart and Lokomotiv Moscow booked their berths in the semi-finals of the European Cup Winners' Cup on Thursday.

Favourites Chelsea went through 5-2 on aggregate after coming back from a goal down to score a 3-1 home victory in their home return against Spanish opponents Real Betis.

Vicenza humiliated Dutch side Roda Kerkrade for the second time in two weeks — handing out a 5-0 home drubbing for a 9-1 win overall.

Stuttgart went through 3-1 — thanks to a 2-0 win over Czech outfit Slavia Prague — both of their goals coming from freekicks by Bulgarian playmaker Krassimir Balakov.

And Lokomotiv Moscow reached the last four after a last-second header from captain Igor Chugainov clinched a 2-1 win over Greek side AEK Athens.

Chelsea, who had won the first leg against Betis 2-1 in Spain, looked to be in serious danger when they went behind to a 20th minute goal from Nigerian ace Finidi George.

But the Londoners, who have lost four of their last five league games, hit back through Frank Sinclair after 50 minutes.

Then Italians Roberto Di Matteo and Gianfranco Zola settled the tie with superb goals in the second-half.

Betis ensured that Chelsea would have to fight when they took the early lead.

Alfonso was the provider, stabbing the ball into the path of George, who raced into the right of the area and buried a low, left-foot shot to the left of Ed de Goey in the Chelsea goal.

Two minutes later, Chelsea almost fell behind in the tie when Croatian Robert Jarni released Finidi who shot over under a challenge by Frenchman Frank Leboeuf.

But Chelsea, unbeaten in 21 home ties in Europe, responded furiously to the setback and had three good chances of their own in the



Andrei Solomatin (L) of Lokomotiv Moscow tackles Nikolaus Kostenoglou of AEK Athens during their European Cup Winner's Cup quarter-final second leg match (Reuters photo)

first half before finally drawing level.

First player-coach Gianluca Vialli forced a smart low save from Antonio Prats with a dipping, angled shot from the edge of the area.

Zola, keen to stake his claims for a place in Italy's World Cup Finals plans, was ten inches away from the equaliser with a curling freekick that cannoned off a post.

Vialli also worried the woodwork when he saw his header rebound off the crossbar after a pinpoint cross from Zola, who was showing his best form for months.

The Londoners' pressure finally brought a deserved equaliser on the half hour mark to maintain their advantage in the tie.

The goal came from the unlikely source of Jamaican defender Sinclair, who brought reward for a string of penetrating attacks with

an unstoppable header from a corner as he rose unmarked in the middle of the area.

Five minutes after the interval Chelsea virtually guaranteed their place in the last four with a superb goal from Di Matteo, who maintained his habit of scoring goals on the big occasion for the London club.

The Italian midfielder, who scored in the first minute of Chelsea's FA Cup triumph last season, created the goal out of nothing.

The former Lazio star burst out of a 50-50 challenge deep in Betis territory before advancing into the left of the area, cutting inside and placing a shot into the far corner of the net.

Zola completed a glorious night for Chelsea when he added Chelsea's third in the dying seconds with a rasping left foot dive from outside the area that flew into the bottom left corner of Prats' goal.

AMMAN (AFP) — Rudi Becker, a former German national coach, will lead the German national football team in the upcoming World Cup qualifiers. Becker, who coached the German national team from 1990 to 1994, was named as the new coach of the national team. He will replace the current coach, Jupp Heynckes. Becker has a long coaching career, having coached several national teams and clubs. He is known for his tactical acumen and for developing young players. The German national team is currently in a rebuilding phase after a disappointing performance in the 1998 World Cup. Becker's appointment is seen as a move to bring a fresh perspective to the team.

AMMAN (AFP) — Alexander Shchikov, a Russian footballer, has returned to his home country. Shchikov, who played for the Russian national team, was on a loan spell in Jordan. He has now completed his loan and will return to his club in Russia. Shchikov is a forward and has scored several goals during his time in Jordan. His return to Russia is seen as a positive development for both the player and his club.

AMMAN (AFP) — Wastle directors have refused to accept the results of a recent match. The directors claim that the match was rigged and that the results are invalid. They have filed a complaint with the relevant authorities and are demanding a full investigation. The match in question was a crucial one in a league competition. The directors' refusal to accept the results has caused a significant stir in the football community. The authorities are currently looking into the matter and will take appropriate action if the allegations are proven to be true.

AMMAN (AFP) — Tatyana Mikova, a Russian athlete, has led her country in a recent competition. Mikova, who is a long jumper, won the gold medal in the final. Her performance was exceptional, as she jumped further than any other competitor. Mikova's victory was a source of pride for Russia and she is now being celebrated as a national hero. She has also set a new world record in her event. Mikova's success is a testament to her hard work and dedication to the sport.

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Becker to lead Germans

HAMBURG (AFP) — Boris Becker will lead Germany into their Davis Cup World Group first-round match against South Africa in Bremen from April 3-5, the German Tennis Federation announced Thursday. Becker, who is semi-retired and has taken charge of the German squad, was named in a four-man team alongside Nicolas Kiefer, Tommy Haas and David Prinosil by non-playing captain Carl-Uwe Steeb. The injury-plagued three-time Wimbledon champion now longer plays Grand Slam events, but selects which tournaments he will contest. His presence provides a boost for the Germans, who are without Marc-Kevin Goellner, who has a shoulder injury.

Stoichkov returns home

BARCELONA (AFP) — Veteran Bulgarian star Hristo Stoichkov, who terminated his contract with Barcelona six days ago, announced here on Thursday that he was returning to his former club CSKA Sofia. The 32-year-old striker, who inspired Bulgaria to the 1994 World Cup semi-finals, said that he was returning to the club he played for in 1989-90 because he needs to play regular first-team football so he can be fit for this year's World Cup finals, which open in Paris on June 10. "I need to be ready for the World Cup. It wasn't a question of money. I was just looking for a team where I would be able to get a regular place," Stoichkov said. Stoichkov ended his contract with the Catalan giants because Dutch coach Louis Van Gaal had effectively told him that he had no future at Barcelona — where he had only managed 59 minutes of first-team football this season. Stoichkov won the hearts of Barca fans under the ultra-successful reign of Van Gaal's compatriot Johan Cruyff and was part of the team which won the 1992 European Champions' Cup. He was later offloaded to Parma of Italy, where he had an unhappy few months before returning to the Nou Camp last summer. Stoichkov first joined the Catalan giants in 1990. He won the Golden Boot as top scorer in Europe in 1994 and scored 117 goals for the club. As well as winning the Champions' Cup, Stoichkov won four league championship medals between 1991 and 1994, the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1997 as well as the Spanish Cup.

Newcastle directors refuse to quit

LONDON (AFP) — Under-pressure Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd and vice-chairman Douglas Hall are refusing to resign. Hall's solicitor — Gerrard Tyrrell, of Harbottle and Lewis, in London — announced Friday that both Hall and Shepherd would be staying on the board, even though both know that the News of the World are likely to carry further allegations about them this Sunday. They have been under fire from Magpies fans since last weekend, when the newspaper published statements allegedly made by them to an undercover reporter. Mr Tyrrell stressed that the situation would have been different if Hall and Shepherd had said these things without any prompting. Mr Tyrrell also said that his client had categorically denied ever taking any bribe to secure an allegation likely to appear this Sunday.

Kournikova leads Russia in Fed Cup

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Teen star Anna Kournikova has been added to the Russian squad for next month's Fed Cup tennis tie against Australia in Perth. Sixteen-year-old Kournikova, a Wimbledon semi-finalist last year, and Elena Likhovtseva, who reached a world ranking high of 16 last year, will give Russia a decided advantage in the World Group tie on grass from April 18. The Australian team is Rachel McQuillan, Kerry-Anne Guse, Annabel Ellwood and Renae Stubbs.

Promotion race set to go the distance

LONDON (AFP) — Nottingham Forest will be hoping to keep their noses in front in one of the tightest First Division promotion races in years when they face play-off hopefuls Birmingham on Saturday. Forest are in pole position to take one of the two automatic promotion places after a 3-0 win over Bury at the weekend gave them a two point lead over Middlesbrough who failed to beat Portsmouth. But Sunderland, who face Alan Ball's rejuvenated Portsmouth at home, are also in the running in third position just two points behind Boro. Barring a miraculous series of results, the current mathematics means that two of the three teams relegated from the Premiership last season are guaranteed an immediate return to the top flight. Forest boss Dave Bassett said it was impossible to predict which of the three will go up.

Blazers beat Knicks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reggie Miller scored 20 points, including two free throws with 13.4 seconds left, as the Indiana Pacers survived a fourth-quarter rally to beat the Washington Wizards 95-91 Thursday night.

Miller scored eight points in a three-minute run that put Indiana up by 13 late in the third quarter. Mark Jackson had 10 points and 12 assists for the Pacers. Rod Strickland had 24 points and 14 assists for the Wizards, who were hurt by 14 turnovers and 12-for-22 free-throw shooting.

• **Raptors 104, Nuggets 103, OT:** In Toronto, Chauncey Billups, held scoreless in the first three quarters, scored 12 points in the fourth quarter and six in overtime as the Toronto Raptors beat the Denver Nuggets.

Billups made four free throws in the last 25.8 seconds of overtime as the Raptors cooled off the Nuggets, who had won three of their previous four games. Denver (8-60) still needs to win two games to avoid finishing with the worst record in NBA history, the 9-73 mark set 25 years ago by the Philadelphia 76ers. Dee Brown scored 24 points for Toronto, while Johnny Newman led Denver with 24.

• **Trail Blazers 82, Knicks 77:** In New York, Arvydas Sabonis and Brian Grant each scored 21 points as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the New York Knicks despite a late field-goal drought.

Portland did not score from the field in the final 4:16 and practically gave the game away, but an even bigger mistake by the Knicks — a 5-second violation on Charles Oakley with 7.4 seconds left — cost them a chance for the win. Isaiah Rider added 16 points for the Blazers, who snapped a four-game road losing streak. Charlie Ward had a season-high 19 points and 11 assists for New York, which lost for the seventh time in nine games.

• **Nets 93, Magic 87:** In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Kendall Gill hit a go-ahead jumper with 1:54 left and the New Jersey Nets went on to defeat the Orlando Magic to bolster their playoff chances.

Coupled with Washington's loss to Indiana, New Jersey (35-32) moved a game ahead of the Wizards (34-33) for the eighth and final playoff spot in the East. Orlando (33-33) trails the Nets by 1 1/2 games with a month left in the regular season.

Keith Van Horn, who missed the last three games with a broken toe on his right foot, led the Nets with 19 points. Sam Cassell added 17 points, including

six free throws in the final 41 seconds. Nick Anderson scored a season-high 38 points for Orlando.

• **Hawks 84, Bucks 81:** In Atlanta, Steve Smith sank a go-ahead bank shot and Eldridge Recasner hit a pair of free throws with 4.3 seconds left as Atlanta handed Milwaukee its eighth straight loss. Hawks center Dikembe Mutombo had 18 points, 15 rebounds and tied his season-high with eight blocked shots.

Smith added 17 points and Alan Henderson had 14 points and 14 rebounds as Atlanta won its third straight and seventh in eight games. Ray Allen scored 21 points for the Bucks.

• **Rockets 105, Celtics 96:** In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 15 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter as the Houston Rockets won their fifth straight game. The Celtics, who have lost six in a row, kept the Rockets off balance most of the game with their pressing defence and Houston didn't take the lead for good until Olajuwon's basket with 5:44 left put the Rockets up 85-83. Ron Mercer scored 31 points for the Celtics.

• **Mavericks 88, Warriors 82, OT:** In Dallas, Shawn Bradley had 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Eric Riley scored a career-high 16 points as the Dallas Mavericks beat the Golden State Warriors in overtime.

Michael Finley had 14 points for the Mavericks, who recovered after blowing a 10-point lead in the final 2:46 of regulation. Dallas has won three of its last five games. Erick Dampier and Jim Jackson each scored 18 points for the Warriors, who lost their fifth straight.

• **Cavaliers 90, Kings 85:** In Sacramento, California, Shawn Kemp had 19 points and 14 rebounds as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Sacramento Kings. The Cavs' third straight victory, combined with New York's loss to Portland, pulled Cleveland into a sixth-place tie with the Knicks in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Derek Anderson scored 18 points and Wesley Person had 16 for Cleveland.

Brevin Knight added 13 points, and Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavs. Cortis Williamson scored 21 points and Otis Thorpe had 20 for Sacramento, which has lost six straight and 13 of 15. Mitch Richmond, playing with a sore right knee, was scoreless in the first half and finished with 12 points for the Kings.

Injured Graf and weather dampen Lipton opening day

KEY BISCAIYNE (AFP)

— Steffi Graf, still nursing a pulled hamstring, pulled out of the Lipton tennis championships Thursday, overshadowing the rain-disrupted action on opening day.

The former World No. 1 announced her decision after an unsatisfactory practice on Thursday morning.

"I hoped that everything would be all right," said Graf, who has won the Lipton title five times, in 1987-88 and 1994-96.

"After a few balls, it became clear that the injury has not healed. I am still having treatment, but when I will play again is a question I can't answer."

The fourth seed's withdrawal followed that of seventh-seeded Croatian Iva Majoli, who is suffering from bronchitis.

It was the latest blow for Graf, winner of 21 Grand Slam singles titles, who is trying to come back after a nine-month absence after knee surgery.

Key Biscayne was to have been the final tournament in which she had the benefit of her protected world ranking.

That gave her the No. 4 seeding here, and like all the top seeds a bye into the second round of the tournament regarded as the behind only the four Grand Slams in importance.

The byes for the top 32 players in both the men's and women's draws, coupled with rain delays of three hours, made for a slow start.

American Serena Williams, younger sister of U.S. Open runner-up Venus Williams, eased into the second-round with a 6-4, 6-0 victory over Czech Denisa Chladkova.

She now plays Romanian Irina Spirlea, who had some bitter words for the elder Williams sister after their infamous tangle on a change-over in the U.S. Open semi-final.

Chanda Rubin disposed of Czech Lenka Nemeckova 6-3, 6-3 to earn a second-round clash with World No. 1 Martina Hingis.



Steffi Graf



Workers dry off the stadium court after a morning of heavy rain delayed the start of first round play at 14th Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne, Florida. The Lipton, which is the only 11-day tournament on the ATP Tour, has \$4.6 million in prize money (Reuters photo)

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- Medical Officer:**
 - Provides medical and counselling support for American volunteers living in rural and urban areas of Jordan.
 - Must be able to be on-call 24 hours/day for medical emergencies. Routine office hours are 8:30-5:00, Sunday through Thursday.
 - Maintains all administrative systems and records for the medical section. Knowledge of computer usage required.
 - Experience in teaching basic health information to large groups.
 - Registered Nurse or Physician credentials required, U.S. or British medical training or experience desired.
 - Fluency in speaking, reading and writing English required; knowledge of Arabic desired.
- Programme Assistant:**
 - Assists in the management of a development assistance programme involving Jordanian organisations and American volunteers.
 - Maintains administrative systems, correspondence and files for the programme and training section. Translates and prepares routine correspondence in Arabic and English. Speaking, writing and reading fluency in English and Arabic is required.
 - Assists in the delivery of cross cultural training for volunteers.
 - University completion and one year experience in a professional office. Advanced skills in typing Arabic and English using computers. Previous experience in social service or development programmes desired.

Interested applicants should mail or fax their curriculum vitae and a cover letter including salary history no later than March 31, 1998 to:

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Arafat: PNA waiting for U.S. initiative

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote to U.S. President Bill Clinton that an Israeli troop withdrawal from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank, as proposed by Washington, would endanger Israel's security, a newspaper said Friday.

Mr. Netanyahu's senior adviser, David Bar-Ilan, confirmed a letter was written, but would not reveal its content. Israel has been trying to discourage the United States from going public with its proposal, which also asks the Palestinians to reciprocate with security gestures, such as banning incitement.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said the United States would only do damage by going public.

"We don't feel that an imposed solution is viable," Mr. Bar-Ilan told The Associated Press. "On the contrary, it would be extremely counterproductive and would

encourage the Palestinians to believe they don't have to negotiate, that they can rely on others to force Israel to make concessions, and if it doesn't, make it look like the intransigent party."

In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Friday he would only respond once the proposal has been submitted formally.

"We are waiting for something official very soon," Mr. Arafat told reporters after a meeting with Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima.

Mr. Arafat said the European Union decided to hold off on presenting its own ideas because it didn't want to spoil any U.S. initiative.

U.S. officials reportedly are divided over whether to go public with the plan which would be widely perceived as putting pressure on Israel. Mr. Netanyahu has said he would only agree to a withdrawal

from 9 per cent of the West Bank, and this is what he wrote to President Clinton several days ago, according to the Yediot Ahronot daily.

Under the U.S. plan, Israeli troops would withdraw from West Bank areas in several small steps over 12 weeks, with each pullback met by Palestinian security gestures. After the staged withdrawal, the two sides would begin talks on a final peace agreement, including the future of Jerusalem and final borders.

In other developments Friday, several dozen Palestinian teen-agers threw stones at Israeli troops on a main West Bank thoroughfare near the West Bank village of Dura. Israeli soldiers fired rubber-coated bullets to disperse the youths — most of them Dura residents who said they were protesting against the March 10 shooting deaths of three workers from Dura at an

army roadblock. One demonstrator was lightly injured.

On the outskirts of the West Bank town of Hebron, more than a dozen Israeli peace activists helped rebuild the home of a Palestinian family that was demolished twice over the past decade by Israeli authorities for lack of a building permit. Volunteers carried buckets with gravel to level the ground for new construction.

The Atrash family — a husband, wife and eight children — have been living in three tents since their one-story home was razed on March 3.

Israel's military government in the West Bank said it had to enforce building codes. Palestinians accuse Israel of using house demolitions as a political tool, saying it is often refusing to issue building permits in areas it hopes to keep under Israeli control.

Netanyahu ahead of Barak — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu maintained his standing in opinion polls after a tumultuous diplomatic week for Israel and would handily defeat opposition leader Ehud Barak if elections were held today, according to a survey published Friday.

The poll released by the Maariv newspaper said Mr. Netanyahu won 44 per cent of the vote for prime minister compared to 38 per cent for Mr. Barak, head of the Labour Party. Eighteen per cent of those queried were undecided.

Until last month Mr. Barak repeatedly beat Mr. Netanyahu in voter opinion polls whose results were often interpreted as a disavowal of the right-wing government's headline approach in peace talks with the Palestinians.

But last week Mr. Netanyahu

pulled ahead of Mr. Barak for the first time after the Labour leader sparked a furore by saying in a television interview that if he had been born Palestinian he would have joined a terrorist organisation.

That survey had Mr. Netanyahu leading Mr. Barak 44 to 36 per cent.

This week's poll also came after Mr. Netanyahu gained wide public support for his handling of a controversial visit by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

Mr. Cook, in a bid to understand European disapproval of Israel's Jewish settlement policies, met with a Palestinian official at a new Jewish settlement project in Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu portrayed the incident as an attempt to undermine Israel's claim of sovereignty over all of Jerusalem and cut short his meetings with

Mr. Cook, sparking a diplomatic incident.

In the poll published Friday, Mr. Netanyahu nearly equalled Mr. Barak in support from the 850,000-strong Arab Israeli community which traditionally backs Labour. Of Arab voters, 44 per cent backed Mr. Netanyahu compared to 46 per cent for Mr. Barak.

Those favouring Mr. Netanyahu said they felt he would better protect their security and reach a better peace deal with the Palestinians than Mr. Barak.

The main survey questioned a representative sample of 500 Jewish Israelis, and had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent. Maariv gave no details about the poll of Arab Israelis which was carried out separately.

The next general elections in Israel are scheduled for the year 2000.

Gunfire at Israeli envoy's residence in Lima not political attack

LIMA (AP) — An exchange of gunfire in front of the Israeli ambassador's residence in Lima was not a terrorist attack, but an attempted car robbery, Israeli Ambassador Joel Salpik said Friday.

Moments after Herbert Weier, the German ambassador in Peru, got out of his car Thursday evening, armed attackers opened fire, apparently aiming at Mr. Weier's car.

Security personnel returned fire at the estimated fifteen attackers, who arrived in three cars. But no one was hurt. Mr. Weier was one of several diplomats who were invited to an informal birthday dinner at Mr. Salpik's home. Initial reports suggested it was a terrorist attack aimed at the Israeli ambassador or one of his guests.

"Common crime occurs in all parts of the world. It occurs in Lima, it happens in London and unfortunately sometimes it also happens in Jerusalem. There is no reason to turn a small thing into a big deal," Mr. Salpik said in an interview.

The attackers fled the scene abandoning one car loaded with assault rifles, bullet proof vests, ammunition, cellular phones and a flashing light of the type found on the roofs of police cars.

Norwegian FM to visit U.S. to discuss Mideast peace process

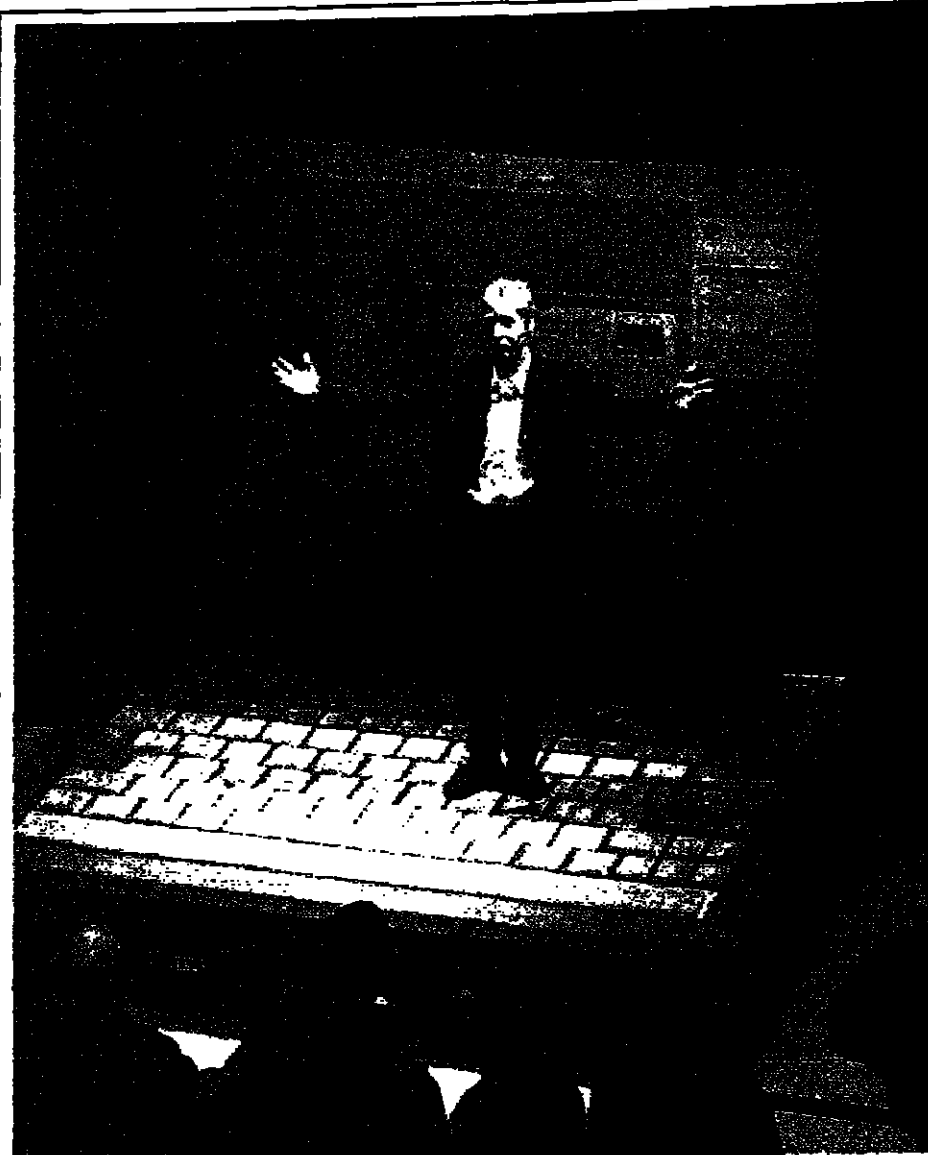
OSLO (AFP) — Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk will travel to Washington on Monday to discuss the Middle East peace process with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, his ministry said late Thursday.

The foreign ministry said Mr. Vollebæk and Ms. Albright would discuss the stalemate in the peace process as well as the official visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made to Oslo on March 6-8.

Sudan lashes out at Clinton's visit to Uganda

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Bishop Gabriel Rorec has described the upcoming visit of U.S. President Bill Clinton to neighbouring Uganda as a sign of hostility toward Sudan by both the United States and Uganda itself, said the daily Al Oshou.

Bishop Rorec said the omission of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo from countries on Mr. Clinton's African tour "will raise a big question about the intention of the American administration toward the two countries." He wanted that Clinton's tour was aimed at serving his own administration's interests, rather than the welfare of African nations.



BIGGEST COMPUTER FAIR: A promoter for the American Online (AOL) service stands on a huge mock-up laptop as he explains the latest AOL software upgrades at CEBIT computer fair in Hanover on Friday. CEBIT is the world's biggest computer fair and lasts until March 25 (Reuters photo)

India's BJP, opposition brace for first parliament showdown

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling Hindu nationalist coalition braced Friday for its first showdown with the opposition over its choice for parliamentary speaker.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), just a day after taking power, was trying to persuade the opposition to back a "consensus" candidate for the powerful post of speaker.

But party officials said the Congress Party, the nationalists' main foe, and the centre-left United Front coalition appeared determined to field a candidate of their own.

The election of the speaker of the 545-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house, is scheduled for March 24. It will be followed by a vote of confidence for the new government four days later.

The contest over the speaker's post, BJP leaders fear, may add to the uncertainty about the longevity of the tenuous 10-party coalition.

It has also reinforced problems facing Mr. Vajpayee, 71, as he starts to rule India with a wafer-thin majority and help of a dozen disparate allies.

The Hindu nationalists and allies have just one seat less.

Mr. Vajpayee, later Friday, submitted the full list of his ministers to President K.R. Narayanan after wrangling with the BJP and allies had delayed

the allocation of portfolios for 21 junior ministers.

The BJP, whose headline policies were toned down to keep the coalition intact, said Friday that no decision had been taken to build nuclear bombs.

Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes told reporters "we have not taken a decision on making, such weapons", but added that India would "not fight shy" of acquiring nuclear arms if needed.

India last year refused to sign a global test ban treaty, arguing that it was discriminatory and did not include a commitment to world disarmament.

The new finance minister, Yashwant Sinha, meanwhile, assured foreign companies that they had nothing to fear from the Hindu nationalists.

Mr. Sinha said "multinationals need not fear about investments in India" and his ministry would soon announce priority areas for foreign investment.

The moderate Mr. Sinha, a surprise choice for the finance portfolio, also said the nationalists were committed in principle to New Delhi's free-market reforms of 1991.

"Our government's clear view is that the reform process was a step in the right direction," he said.

On the stock exchange, share prices were up marginally on what dealers called "positive statements" from Mr. Sinha on the economy and foreign investment.

The 30-share Bombay Stock Exchange sensitive index closed the day 19.53 points or 0.5 per cent higher at 3,840.40 points. Mr. Sinha said his government would not let the country "go through the same fate as the Southeast Asian nations," adding he would not "like to have a run on our currency."

Stock broker Gaurav Sanghvi said: "Prices moved up after Sinha's statement though there was lot of concern and anxiety in the morning."

The Indian rupee also strengthened, to 39.51 against the dollar.

Mr. Sinha's selection as finance minister disappointed industry and stock markets whose first choice was Jaswant Singh, a free-market enthusiast.

Newspapers said Jaswant Singh ran into bitter opposition from the influential Hindu militant group, the RSS (National Volunteer Corps), which is widely known to guide the BJP's policies.

Hardline Hindu nationalists argue that foreign investment should be counted in certain core sectors like infrastructure but not in consumer goods. They have vowed to shield certain domestic industries for up to 10 years.

The BJP and its dozen allies formed the government despite lacking a parliamentary majority after a 12-seat United Front member party declared it would abstain during the confidence vote.

French far right throws conservatives into crisis

PARIS (AFP) — Jean-Marie Le Pen's controversial far right National Front threw French conservatives into crisis by helping mainstream right-wingers clinch regional office Friday in deals brokered by President Jacques Chirac.

Mr. Chirac this week urged the mainstream right to make "no compromise" with the front. "I believe that when one has republican convictions, which is my own case and that of a very great majority of French people, one must make no compromise."

After a severe defeat at the hands of the left-wing coalition of Socialists, Communists and Greens in last year's general elections, France's mainstream right is still soul-searching, while the National Front is digging its feet into the political landscape with a solid 15 per cent of the vote.

By throwing its weight behind right-wing local incumbents in votes for the presidents of France's regional assemblies, the front played "kingmaker" in at least six of the 21 assemblies, unleashing a storm threatening to explode their rivals in the mainstream opposition.

Three of the six right-wingers, elected in deals with the far right

were immediately suspended while the front for its part speculated that this was the beginning of the end for their rivals.

"They are in total rack and ruin," said Mr. Le Pen's deputy Bruno Megret. "Their future lies not in one big party, but in two new ones: one that is in agreement with the left, the other with the National Front."

Mr. Le Pen unsettled the conservative right with an offer this week to support members facing defeat at the hands of the left in return for local platforms including pet front themes — no rise in local taxes, more law-and-order and support for "French cultural and regional identities."

With power and perks at stake, and still stinging from last year's defeat, a string of local leaders have taken the bait.

Jacques Blanc, outgoing head of the Languedoc-Roussillon region around Montpellier, was the first to go to bed with the front. The ruling left-wing coalition had won a relative majority in the region in countywide polls last weekend and stood to win the presidency. Front votes gave the region instead to Mr. Blanc.

His centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF) wasted no time in handing down his

suspension.

Socialist rival Georges Flesche said he "sold his soul to the devil."

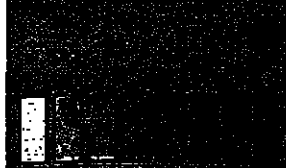
Highlighting the deep rifts within the opposition right, Charles Millon, defence minister in the previous right-wing government, hammered at the polls last year, also clinched a win with support from the far right.

Also a member of the UDF, he won the presidency of the powerful Rhone-Alpes region around Lyon. France's second biggest in economic clout and population.

Front leader Bruno Gollnisch, saying he had "received pledges" from Mr. Millon, ordered 35 far right councillors to vote for the former minister, who was facing a neck-and-neck race with the governing left-wing coalition.

In Franche-Comte near the eastern town of Besancon, Jean-Francois Humbert, also of the UDF, won 26 votes though the mainstream right was neck-and-neck with the left at 17 each last weekend.

But Mr. Humbert immediately renounced the presidency saying he did not want "votes I never asked for." The election will have to be rerun.



Collins attacks 'trendy hideosity' of modern designers

LONDON (AFP) — Actress Joan Collins, once the epitome of power-dressing, has mounted a blistering attack on the "trendy hideosity" of modern designers. She predicted the new century would see "models wearing plastic bin-liner trousers fashioned with welders' rivets" and hair "torn into wirewool spirals." Writing in The Spectator magazine, Collins said: "Many style gurus must loathe women — not the anorexic, androgynous teenagers who stalk the catwalks like heroin addicts in search of a fix, but real women with real bodies. The contempt for us is so glaringly obvious that it is amazing that so many women allow themselves to buy in to it."

Firefighters' museum fails fire safety standards

WINNIPEG (AP) — A group of firefighters is trying to build Winnipeg's first firefighters' museum, but the site they've chosen — an old fire hall — doesn't meet fire safety standards.

Ted Kuryluk, president of the Firefighters' Historical Society, said the society needs more money to finish the sprinkler system and install fire exits. The firefighters didn't appear surprised by the amount of work the building needed. After all, the first fire hall burned down in 1875. The second burned down too and was replaced in 1903 by the current hall. "I guess they always figured they were right there" if anything were to go wrong, Kuryluk said.

JFK's long Johns fetch \$3,350

NEW YORK (AFP) — Long underwear once worn by President John F. Kennedy was the big draw at an auction, snapped up by a collector with plans to put it in a catalogue with Marilyn Monroe's panties and bra. Maryland memorabilia collector Richard Wilson shelled out \$3,350 for the set of wool-and-cotton top and trousers, but said he wouldn't be wearing it. Instead, he'll display it in his sale-by-mail catalogue "Norman Jeans," which features items that once belonged to Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, Grace Kelly, Elvis Presley, Liz Taylor and Frank Sinatra.

Queen samples the joys of the supermarket

WHINFELL (AP) — The last place Andy Brown expected to see Queen Elizabeth II was at the supermarket, but there she was Friday, in the checkout line with him. "It's probably the first time she's been to a supermarket," said the 32-year-old Brown, thrilled by his royal encounter. The queen was not buying supplies for the palace larder, but touring the food hall in a new vacation village as part of a visit to Cumbria. "She asked if we'd enjoyed our stay and if we were stocking up on provisions for our journey home," Brown said. "She was absolutely lovely and looked radiant."

Tall guys at Amsterdam furniture show

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — A club for tall people is taking a stand at the Amsterdam furniture fair to show what life is like for the very tall. The Tall People's Club aims to show off a range of designs including specially-built kitchens, oversized beds and armchairs. Membership of the club is on condition of being over 1.90-metre for men or 1.80-metre for women. The average height of men and women in the Netherlands is, respectively, 1.83 and 1.69 metres. This makes them the tallest people in Europe. If current growth rates continue the Dutch should be two metres tall by the middle of next century.

Algerian troops kill rebels — security forces

ALGERIA — Troops killed 11 rebels in a clash with security forces in the north-eastern town of Bordj Bou Arridj.

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